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1852

No. XCVII.

MODERN STANDARD DRAMA.

EDITED BY F. C. WEMYSS.

THE

SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER.

A Comedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS, CAST OF CHARACTERS,
COSTUMES, RELATIVE POSITIONS, ETC.

BY A. CHERRY.

NEW-YORK:

WM. TAYLOR & CO., 16 Park-Place.

BALTIMORE, MD.:

WM. & HENRY TAYLOR, Sun Iron Buildings.

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CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY  
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WM. TAYLOR & CO.,  
March 22d, 1852. 151 Nassau-st., N. Y.

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## REMARKS

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ANDREW CHERRY, the Author of the "Soldier's Daughter," was an Actor of repute upon the London Stage, and from the practical knowledge of the clap-traps of his profession, availed himself of a time to produce this play, when England was in a perfect blaze of patriotism ; when every man was a volunteer, and every boy a soldier, anxious to defend his native land from the threatened invasion of Buonaparte. At such a time, with such a theme upon every tongue, not to have applauded patriotic speeches, uttered by a young and handsome woman, would have been worse than treason ; the Author, therefore, risked no failure, for he had carried his audience by a "coup-de-main."

No Play has been more roughly handled by Critics, or more warmly applauded by the audience assembled to witness its representation ; and, although the characters belong to a past age, Governor Heartall, Widow Cheerly, and Timothy Quaint, will always keep it among the catalogue of Acting Plays. The dashing style of the laughing young widow, making her a favorite part, with Actresses of eminence, to select, for their debut, before a strange audience ; and improbable as the incidents may be, they never fail to meet the approbation of the audience, who, having enjoyed a hearty laugh, are not so captious when leaving the theatre, as to find fault with the author of their amusement.

F. C. W.





## PROLOGUE.

(BY THE AUTHOR OF THE COMEDY.)

*Spoken by Mr. Pope.*

THE wretch condemn'd, who pines in silent sorrow,  
And fears the dawn of the all-dreadful morrow,  
When, from this earth his soul must take her flight,  
The realms to seek of all-eternal night :—  
As he the awful scaffold slowly climbs,  
And dreads the vengeance that attends his crimes.—  
Hope, like a smiling cherub, opes her gate,  
And points out Mercy on her throne of state !  
Justice, obedient to the white-rob'd maid,  
Sheathes her drawn sword—and grants her willing aid.  
So the scar'd author of our play, to-night,  
Dreads—ev'n these lamps, that bring his crimes to light.  
Tho' chilling dew-drops mark the culprit's fear,  
He knows your justice—if his cause you hear ;  
But should his guilt excite the critic fury,  
His hope is—Mercy ; from an English jury !

A home-spun fabric he presents to view ;  
Devis'd, constructed, and prepar'd, for you.—  
From Nature drawn, and fed with Nature's food ;  
His men and women—merely flesh and blood.  
Thro' his rude scenes Benevolence holds place,  
To chase the tear from off pale Sorrow's face ;  
Cheer the sad Husband and the faithful Wife,  
And fain would smooth the rugged road of life.  
A youthful Merchant ventures on this shore,  
(Where many a Merchant has been seen before :)  
Ye sons of Commerce, grant your pow'rful aid,  
And give your voices—in support of trade.  
He adds thereto, to fill his varied scene,  
A sprightly fair-one of no vulgar mien,  
From Nature's School, with Virtue's precepts taught her,  
A Yeoman's Widow, and a Soldier's Daughter !

All English growth ! from garden, forest, field—  
Some perfun'd flowers, while some a poison yield :  
Who from his native land all ill can root ?  
Ev'n Eden's Garden nurs'd forbidden fruit.  
Our Author, therefore, if his schemes you scan,  
But shews the danger, to preserve the man.

If in these home-made scenes, he bade me say,  
You aught can find to send you pleas'd away ;  
If woe domestic can its griefs impart,  
Or sportive pleasure animate the heart ;  
At both he aims—and should his schemes succeed,  
Your gen'rous plaudits make him blest indeed !  
If with your smiles you greet his first endeavour,  
You bind him yours,—for ever and for ever !

## COSTUME.

GOVERNOR HEARTALL.—Grey cloth regimental coat, white waistcoat and breeches.—Second Dress : Great coat and cocked hat.

FRANK HEARTALL.—Modern suit.

MALFORT, SEN.—Old gentleman's black velvet suit. Camlet fly and cocked hat.

MALFORT, JUN.—Modern suit.

FERRET.—Crimson coat and waistcoat, black velvet breeches, hat trimmed up behind.

TIMOTHY QUAIN.—Old fashioned brown coat, white cloth waistcoat, brown breeches, small cocked hat.

SIMON.—Drab suit, hat, &c.

THE WIDOW CHEERLY.—Pink satin dress, trimmed with blond lace.

MRS. MALFORT.—White muslin dress, trimmed with cotton fringe.

MRS. FIDGET.—Brown silk gown, blue quilted petticoat, white apron.

JULIA.—White frock.

SUSAN.—Coloured cotton gown.

MRS. TOWNLY.—Brown muslin dress.



## TIME OF REPRESENTATION.

The time this piece takes in representation is two hours and fifty-seven minutes. The first act occupies the space of thirty minutes ; the second, forty ; the third, thirty-five ; the fourth, thirty-seven ; the fifth, thirty-five.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

|                                | <i>Drury Lane,<br/>London.</i> | <i>Chesnut Street Theatre,<br/>Philadelphia, Pa.</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Governor Heartall</i> - - - | Mr. Dowton                     | Mr. Warren                                           |
| <i>Frank Heartall</i> - - -    | Mr. Elliston                   | Mr. Wemyss                                           |
| <i>Malfort, Sen.</i> - - - -   | Mr. Powell                     | Mr. Wheatley                                         |
| <i>Malfort, Jun.</i> - - - -   | Mr. Wallack                    | Mr. Wood                                             |
| <i>Captain Woodley</i> - - -   | Mr. S. Penley                  | Mr. H. Wallack                                       |
| <i>Ferret</i> - - - - -        | Mr. Gattie                     | Mr. Hathwell                                         |
| <i>Timothy Quaint</i> - - -    | Mr. Penley                     | Mr. Jefferson                                        |
| <i>Simon</i> - - - - -         | Mr. Maddocks                   | Mr. Francis                                          |
| <i>William</i> - - - - -       | Mr. Ebsworth                   | Mr. Bignall                                          |
| <i>George</i> - - - - -        | Mr. Evans                      |                                                      |
| <i>Tom</i> - - - - -           | Mr. Minton                     | Mr. Murray                                           |
| <i>James</i> - - - - -         | Mr. Buxton                     | Mr. Mestaye                                          |
|                                |                                |                                                      |
| <i>Widow Cheerley</i> - - -    | Mrs. Mardyn                    | Mrs. Darley                                          |
| <i>Mrs. Malfort</i> - - -      | Miss Boyce                     | Mrs. Anderson                                        |
| <i>Julia</i> - - - - -         | Miss C. Carr                   | Miss H. Hathwell                                     |
| <i>Mrs. Fidget</i> - - - -     | Mrs. Sparks                    | Mrs. Francis                                         |
| <i>Susan</i> - - - - -         | Mrs. Scott                     | Mrs. Murray                                          |
| <i>Mrs. Townley</i> - e - -    | Mrs. Maddocks                  | Mrs. Simpson                                         |

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## RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*;  
 S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*;  
 F. *the Flat*; D. F. *Door in Flat*.

THE

SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER.

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“ ACT I.

“ SCENE I.—*An Antichamber in the House of Malfort, senior.*

(*A very loud single knock at the outside door, L.H.*)

“ *Enter WILLIAM, M.D., and SIMON, R.H., meeting.*

“ *Sim.* Well, William—what—what’s the matter now ?

“ *Will.* Not much, master Simon ; only Mr. Ferret’s porter, to let you know that his master intends to call as he returns from ’Change.

“ *Sim.* Aye ; like foul weather, he generally comes unsent for. Shall I tell you a secret, William ? I hate that man ! I detest your sly, slow, hesitating friendships ; plain honesty flows freely from the heart to the lips, and honor gives it utterance. (*A loud knock at the outer door.*) Heyday ! Mr. Ferret’s porter again, I suppose !

“ *Will.* (*Looking off, M.D.*) No ; it is Mr. Ferret himself.

" *Sim.* Is it?—then begone, William; get about your business—have an eye to the door—look to the plate—let nothing be stolen, nothing be wasted.

" *Will.* I am gone, old Careful. [*Exit William, M.D.*]

" *Sim.* Old Careful! 'Gad a'mercy, young Prateapace!

" *Fer.* (*Within, M.D.*) What, in this room, is he?—Oh! very well.

" *Enter FERRET, M.D.*

" *Fer.* Hah, old Adage, are you there?

" *Sim.* Yes, sir, I am here:—an old adage is better than a new face.

" *Fer.* A new face?

" *Sim.* Yes, sir: some folks have a collection, and can wear the kind of countenance that best answers their purpose.

" *Fer.* Well said, old boy!—ha, ha, ha! Well; have you had any news from India, from my old friend, your master?

" *Sim.* No:—hav'nt you? 'Tis whispered that you have. Paper speaks when beards never wag.

" *Fer.* I am his factor here; and, from his clerks, I sometimes have a hint of his domestic concerns. But should he suddenly surprise us by his appearance, all things, I trust, are right, Simon—you understand me?

" *Sim.* No—speak out; I am old, and dull of apprehension.

" *Fer.* A hint should be enough, friend Simon: you know I am a plain, simple, straight-forward fellow—apt to talk too much, perhaps.

" *Sim.* (*Slily.*) Or not enough, perhaps.

" *Fer.* You know, master Simon, I can't flourish upon a subject; but I do most heartily wish to make my worthy friend, my benefactor, too, your honor'd master—(*Taking Simon's hand, with the affectation of great kindness.*) I say, I could wish to set his heart at rest upon a subject that absorbs all other thoughts, and renders even his large possessions, his lands, his ingots, and accumulating wealth, mere unregarded dross.

" *Sim.* Ay, I understand you, *now*—our lost young master. It is a subject I never cared to touch upon—

“ he can't bear it. After our good lady's death, and my  
“ old master went to take possession in the East, our  
“ young gentleman was left behind, to adjust some family  
“ affairs, and then to follow—but no—oh dear, no—the  
“ hungry ocean will gape, and we fear our dear young  
“ master long since has been its prey.

“ *Fer.* I may be wrong. I am naturally anxious, you  
“ know. 'Tis true, your master, should he survive, most  
“ likely will expect from me, on his return, some satisfac-  
“ tion on this subject; but is it the office of a man to make  
“ his patron miserable?—no. His letters have been filled  
“ with strong expressions of parental solicitude.

“ *Sim.* (*Catching him up.*) What—he has written  
“ then.

“ *Fer.* N—yes—yes—yes—on his first going abroad, I  
“ certainly had letters—

“ *Sim.* Which you have answered like a consoling com-  
“ forter.

“ *Fer.* No.

“ *Sim.* I thought so. (*Aside.*)

“ *Fer.* I have replied to them with caution. Poor Henry!  
“ poor fellow! He has had many strange tossings and  
“ tumblings. I have had my emissaries at work, who have  
“ still kept an attentive eye upon his conduct; but his  
“ progress was velocity itself. Immediately after the de-  
“ parture of his father, he became what we call quite a  
“ *jolly dog*: while his cash lasted, he kept his horses, his  
“ hounds, his curricie—flashed at the court, drove through  
“ the city, got connected with the family of old Discount,  
“ the banker—

“ *Sim.* That was prudent, however. A worthy man!  
“ Honesty and honor are a noble firm;—'Tis a partnership  
“ that misfortune alone can dissolve.

“ *Fer.* His son (a young profligate) and the younger  
“ Malfort became inseparable friends. His daughter,—  
“ what we call in the city, a dasher,—she forsooth, caught  
“ your young master's fancy—in fine, he married her.

“ *Sim.* Heaven bless them.

“ *Fer.* A union, he well knew, that could never meet  
“ his father's wishes; he has therefore carefully concealed  
“ it from his knowledge. Then, business was the cry—  
“ young Discount and Malfort entered jointly therein—



" one foolish speculation followed up another—your young master was drained—his own possessions sunk—his wife's fortune demolished—her father, heart-broken, died—his son, torn with shame and disappointment, fled, the Lord knows whither; whilst poor Malfort remained, a ruin'd bankrupt, and his wife—

" *Sim.* What? speak!

" *Fer.* Why, perhaps, the most helpless of heaven's afflicted creatures—a beggar'd fine lady.

" *Sim.* Poor pretty creature!—where are they now?

" *Fer.* All my inquiries from this last stage of their situation have been fruitless—entirely fruitless—believe me, Simon. (*As if he knew more but would not utter it.*) Good day, friend Simon! I am naturally anxious; but 'tis not my way to create uneasiness in the bosoms of my friends! Simon, if my purse was large enough, they might all put their hands into it. (*Shaking Simon by the hand with great seeming affection.*) Good day!

[*Exit FERRET, M.D.*

" *Sim.* Ah! I doubt' it much: your purse is like your heart—deep, but close. Oh, my poor young master! Well—he was a generous youth: when but a mere boy, how I have seen him bestow his favors on the wretched; and stand, with moistened eye, to view poor naked children feed upon his bounty! and now, perhaps, he himself needs a benefactor, and pines in secret misery! My old heart cannot bear the thought. Well, there are many turnings in the road of life, and I perhaps, at length, may find the path that leads to comfort; for I would gladly share even my last hard morsel with my master's son.

[*Exit Simon, R.H.*

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" SCENE II.—*An Apartment in Governor Heartall's House.*

" *Enter MRS. FIDGET and TIMOTHY QUAIN, R.H.*

" *Mrs. F.* 'Tis no such a thing, Mr. Timothy; give me leave to know the private concerns of a family that I have lived with before you were born.



" *Tim.* If that's the case they have no private concerns by this time : they are pretty public now.

" *Mrs. F.* Jackanapes ! Does it follow, because I indulge you with my communications, that all the world are to be instructed by me ?

" *Tim.* No ; it does'nt follow, it generally goes before : you retail your knowledge every week-day in small paragraphs, and on Sunday, you rush forth yourself, fresh from the press—a walking journal of weekly communication !

" *Mrs. F.* Well,—am I not right there, mongrel ? It is the moral duty of a Christian to instruct the ignorant, and open the minds of the uninformed.

" *Tim.* Yes ; but you are not content with opening their minds, you open their mouths too, and set them a prating for a week to come.

" *Mrs. F.* It requires but little pains, however, to set you a prating. Such a tongue !—mercy on me ! Gobble, gabble, prittle, prattle, for ever and for ever !

" *Tim.* Lord a mercy ! there's a plumper ! When I came to live in this house, I never opened my lips for the first quarter :—the thing was impossible ; your eternal clatter almost starved, as well as dumb-founded me ; I could put nothing in or out of my mouth ; I was compelled to eat my victuals at midnight ; for, till you were as fast as a church, I was forced to be as silent as a tomb-stone.

" *Mrs. F.* Why, sirrah !—jackanapes !—monkey ! His honor has suffered your impertinent freedoms, 'till you are become quite master of the house ; and now, I suppose, you want to be mistress too.

" *Tim.* So do you ; therefore we quarrel. Two of a trade, you know,—

" *Mrs. F.* But your master shall know of your tricks, your fancies, and your insolences.

" *Tim.* Let him ; he like's it. He says himself I am an odd-fish—a thorn-back, I suppose, or I shouldn't be able to deal with an old-maid.

" *Mrs. F.* Old-maid !—slander !—impudence !—puppy ! Have I liv'd to this time of day to be call'd old-maid at last ? I never, till now, seriously wish'd to be married. Had I a husband—

" *Tim.* If you had, he'd be the most envied mortal in England.

" *Mrs. F.* Why, fellow?—why?

" *Tim.* Because there's not such another woman in the kingdom. (*Bell rings, R.H.*)

" *Mrs. F.* Don't you hear the bell, puppy?

" *Tim.* No; your clapper drowns it.

" *Mrs. F.* My clapper? (*Violently.*)

" *Tim.* Yes, your clapper. (*Calmly.*)

" *Enter* SIMON, L.H.

" *Sim.* O Lord! what's to do here? Why here's a battle royal, between the young bantam and the old hen.

" *Tim.* (*Perceiving Simon.*) Ah! master Simon—how do you do?

" *Sim.* Honest Timothy! give me your hand. Where is the Governor? I have something of importance to impart. Can I see him to communicate?

" *Tim.* Aye, to be sure. Step with me, master Simon, and I'll introduce you to the Governor directly; I haven't seen him this morning, therefore cannot tell you what sort of a humour he's in; he lay down in a frenzy, last night, boiling with rage against his nephew. Mr. Ferret was here, and he always leaves the old gentleman in a stew.

" *Sim.* What!—Old Blow-coal, as I call him? If a dormant spark of animosity exists, his breath is sure to make it blaze.

" *Tim.* Come, then, master Simon, let me show you to the Governor, and see if we cannot contrive to blow up this son of sulphur. [*Exit Timothy, R.H.*]

" *Sim.* Have with you, my boy. (*Going.*)

" *Mrs. F.* Mr. Simon, I shall expect you in my room, when your business is over, to taste my cordial, and drink a safe return to your worthy master.

" *Sim.* That I will with all my heart: yet, let me tell you, Mrs. Fidget, there is no cordial like a gentle temper—nor any beverage half so delicious as when it is sweetened by the lips of good humour.

[*She curtesies—they exeunt—Sim. R.H., Mrs. F. L.H.*]

SCENE III.—*A plain Chamber. MRS. MALFORT discovered.*

*Mrs. M.* How mournfully passes each sad hour, with those on whom misfortune's burden rests! Distress—accumulating distress—even the poignant dread of want; a husband sinking beneath a load of worldly care, and a poor prattling innocent unconscious of her state, are now my sole possessions. A brother, banished by his own imprudence! and my husband's father removed to climes far, far beyond inquiry, and ignorant of his son's desponding state—or, knowing it, perhaps, by evil tongues, or monstrous suggestions hardened to his sufferings. What then remains for me? Despair?—no; that power whose justice shields the weak and mourning sufferer, will shew its mercy also where fortune frowns—not guilt, nor pompous splendid vanity, have caused the sad reverse. Sweet patience be my comfort then—for I will not despair.

*(Seats herself at the table.)*

*Frank Heartall. (Within, L. H.)* Say you so, my little cherub? | Will you be my convoy? With such a pilot I cannot fail to make my port secure.

*Enter JULIA and FRANK HEARTALL, L. H.*

*Julia.* Mamma! here's a gentleman, who says he wants to speak to you. *(Mrs. M. just looks up, and then resumes her situation.)*

*Frank H.* A charming woman! but certainly, not the person I last night traced to this house in her carriage from the opera.

*Julia. (Pulling him by the coat.)* Sir, this is my mamma; you said you had something very particular to say to her.

*Frank H.* Ye—ye—yes, my dear, very particular to a lady, as I thought in this house, but not to her.

*Julia.* Why, is not mamma a lady?

*Frank H.* Certainly, yes, my dear; but—What can I think of all this? she seems absorbed in grief: poor girl! perhaps the neglected victim of some wealthy profligate, and this little prattler the offspring of her dishonor; left ungratefully to perish, while her seducer wantonly drives

his curriele through the public streets, and unblushingly smiles upon each passing female. By heaven! had I my will, such wretches should wear an indelible stamp of infamy, that all good men might shun them, and women learn to abhor the traitors to their sex.

*Mrs. M. (Coming forward.)* Sir, your business, if you please.

*Frank H.* My business, madam, is—A delicate creature, by my soul! (*Aside.*) Why really, madam, I—I—I cannot exactly tell you what my business is. I am here, led by a cherub into the presence of an angel! I dare not rudely ask the cause of your affliction, but your appearance interests me, and I should feel the warmest gratification in alleviating your sorrows.

*Mrs. M.* Sir, there is a frankness in your manner, which assures me of your sincerity: but my uneasiness springs from a source of a domestic nature, in which the interference of a stranger cannot be effectual. I thank you, sir, and beg you will retire.

*Frank H.* Instantly, madam, at your command. (*Going, returns.*) I am an odd, volatile, unthinking fellow; always involved in some cursed scrape or other; but I would not willingly bring a blush upon the cheek of modesty; pray, pardon me, madam, but I fear that you have been betrayed, —yourself and little one abandoned to the world, unfriended and unknown.

*Mrs. M. (In great affliction.)* O, heavens! (*Turns up the stage, and sits down.*)

*Julia. (Going to her.)* Mamma, dear mamma!

*Frank H. (Observing her.)*—Yes,—my old luck!—I have done mischief: I have touched the string; her sensibility revolts at the awakened recollection of her situation, and she feels all the pangs of insulted innocence.

*Mrs. M. (During Heartall's speech appears to ask questions of the child, then coming forward,)* Sir, I now clearly perceive your mistake; you had conceived my child was instructed to bring you hither.

*Frank H.* Really madam, I—

*Mrs. M.* 'Tis a venial error, sir; but you have equally mistaken my circumstances and situation. Nursed in the lap of affluence, I cannot descend to particularize to strangers why I am thus dejected and obscured; I beseech you,

sir, as you are a gentleman, to retire ; my husband's return is every moment expected—his appearance, therefore, might embarrass you, nor could it be fairly understood that you entered these apartments on the invitation of my child. (*Heartall bows to Mrs. M. and is going off the stage when Malfort entering L.H., meets him.*)

*Malf.* I beg your pardon, sir, I have mistaken the apartment. (*Frank H. bows, and looks confused.*)

*Julia.* (*Runs to Malf.*) Oh no, father ! this is our drawing-room ; yonder is mamma. 'Twas I asked the gentleman in to see us ; I thought he wanted my mamma.

*Malf.* Indeed !

*Julia.* Yes, indeed.

*Frank H.* (*Aside.*) So, I am in for it again ; my old luck !

*Malf.* Sir, I know not how to address you, nor can I guess your errand hither : if from those who once called themselves my friends, you have been informed of my misfortunes—the general wreck of my affairs—the total annihilation of my property—and in the pride of fullness and prosperity, are come to banquet on my miseries or insult the virtue of my afflicted wife !—behold it all ; indulge your malice, and begone :—I have not now the spirit to resent ; poverty can make us cowards as well as wretches.

(*Crosses to R.H.*)

*Frank H.* (*Aside.*) Always running my head against stone-walls.—Why, look you, sir. You see me here, the slave of accident. Attracted by the charms of a lady I last night encountered at the opera, I traced her to this house ; and guided by this little seraph, I entered this apartment. If beauty in distress, shining through virtuous tears, excited more than my common notice, it is the lot of man so far to err : but if I have offended her or you, devoutly I entreat your pardon ; and I trust I may yet find an opportunity to convince you, that while my eyes fill at the recital of your distresses, my heart pants with ardor to relieve them. [*Exit Frank H. hastily, L.H.*]

*Julia.* (*Coming forward.*) Dear, dear ! is the gentleman gone ? I'm so sorry ! I'll run and see him to the door.

[*Exit Julia, L.H.*]

(*Malfort, with a deep sigh, throws himself into a chair.*)

*Mrs. Malfort comes from where she was seated, and*



*leaning pensively on his shoulder, takes his hand, and looking tenderly on him, speaks—)*

*Mrs. M.* Henry!

*Malf.* My love? (*After much emotion.*) The trial is past. All is gone; the merciless creditors have shared among them the little remnant of our all; and we are left without a friend—a home—a shilling!

*Mrs. M.* And yet we may still be happy.

*Malf.* Never—never. I am marked by fate a victim for despair. By heaven! were it not for you and my poor suffering innocent, I'd not endure this weight of sorrow and disgrace. To bear the taunting mocks of bloated affluence!—pointed at as the ruined wretch, whom treacherous fortune crushed in her angriest mood, and levelled with the dust. O, torture! torture!

*Mrs. M.* Nay, for my sake, check these tumultuous passions. Consider, Henry: in your prosperous days, when did the unrelieved beggar pass your gate? was your hand ever shut against the orphan's cry? or did the wretched widow's plaint pass unheeded through your ear? The power that punishes, can reward; if vice, though late, must meet the scourge of retribution—virtue has claims, that Providence will foster.

*Malf.* Sweet comforter! If you can endure, 'twere impious in me to murmur: yet fate will have it so. Oh! could the best of fathers and of men—if yet he lives—pierce the gloom of distance, which now obscures us from each others sight—did he but know the virtuous partner of my sufferings, for whose sad sake, and my poor endearing little one, I thus am shook with agonizing torments; his generous spirit would burst through all restraining bonds to banish misery, and all its haggard train of pale-faced sorrows! Oh! multiplying horrors crowd upon my bewildered imagination! Houseless!—friendless!—my wife! my child!—defenceless and forlorn! without the means of satisfying one scanty meal;—too proud to beg—willing to toil, but unequal to the task—no hand to succour, no friend to advise—no faithful bosom to repose my sorrows on!

*Mrs. M.* Yes; here is a hand to succour—a friend to advise—a bosom to repose your sorrows on!

*Malf.* What have I said?—forgive me, Harriet, I shall be calm.

*Mrs. M.* O Henry!—distress, affliction, want of food and raiment, I could endure with you; barefoot and wretched, I could take my infant in these arms, and bear her proudly, though disgrace and misery marked my steps, would you but smile at fortune's angry frown, and bear your lot with patient, manly suffering.

*Malf.* Oh! (*In extreme agony and grief.*)

*Mrs. M.* It is for me you feel these strong emotions, and for my child—I know it, Henry. Yet hope!—for what is not hope? It is the prisoner's freedom, the sick man's health, the Christian's consolation. .

*Malf.* I cannot speak—I feel thee my superior, and am lost in wonder at thy virtues. (*Throws himself into a chair, R. H., extremely moved; she turns, looks at him, clasps her hands in an agony of sorrow, and then seats herself L.H. A pause.*)

*Julia.* (*Entering hastily, L.H.*) O dear—he's gone!—I never yet saw any stranger that I lov'd so well:—when he talk'd of you, mamma, he sigh'd, grew pale as ashes, and wiped his eye so often:—he asked me if I was fond of dolls and toys?—I said “to be sure, sir, all little girls love their dolls.”—“Then,” said he, “take this money, my little angel, and let your mamma buy some for you;”—and then he kissed me, wiped his eyes, and stepped into a carriage. Only look here, father!—La! what nice thin paper he has wrapped it in. (*Unfolding a dollar or crown piece, she hands the coin to her mother, and shews the paper to her father.*)

*Malf.* (*Looking with astonishment at the paper.*) Oh, Providence! Providence! why should the wretch despair?

*Mrs. M.* (*Observing Malfort—looks over his shoulder on the paper.*) Two hundred pounds!—Riches!—Happiness!—New life! (*Sinks into his arms—the child, distressed and alarmed, catches her mother's garment, and looks in her face with an anxious and solicitous concern. Scene closes them in.*)

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Governor Heartall's House.*

*Enter FERRET and TIMOTHY, L.H.*

*Fer.* Well, master Timothy—and so the Governor is quite hearty, you say.

*Tim.* Yes, sir—quite in good heart—I wish I could say as much for all his acquaintance. (*Significantly.*)

*Fer.* You are right, Timothy—a good heart is now a-days a scarce commodity to find.

*Tim.* Perhaps you find it so, sir; for my part I never go abroad to look for one.

*Fer.* Indeed!—it may be so; you have a master that has heart enough for all his family.

*Tim.* Yes; but the goodness of his heart is not domesticated—his is a kind of vagabond heart—that is, for ever strolling; but it is in search of new objects to exercise its bounty on.

*Fer.* Well said, Tim: You seem to know your master perfectly.

*Tim.* Yes, sir; I have lived with him some time—and what, perhaps, you will think very extraordinary—I wish to die with him.

*Fer.* Very extraordinary, indeed.—But here is your master.

*Enter GOVERNOR HEARTALL, R.H.*

Good morrow, Governor!—

*Gov.* Ah! old Ferret—how d'ye do?

*Fer.* In my old way, Governor, well and hearty; but you—you look charmingly.

*Gov.* Do I?—You know that's not true!—I do not look charmingly—'Pshaw! I hate your false compliments.



Well, old Ferret!—when have you seen my nephew?—what do you know of young Scapegrace?

*Fer.* Humph!—nothing—that is—nothing particular.

*Gov.* Then you do know nothing; for every thing he does is particular. The strongest reasons I have for admiring the rascal is his particularities. Sometimes he is particularly civil, at others particularly insolent; now he is overcome by some poor wretch's particular distress, and particularly happy if he can relieve it; he is particularly volatile upon all occasions that are not particular, and particularly miserable when I appear to be particular with him.

*Fer.* But when he squanders large sums upon his particular follies and charities—

*Gov.* I am sure he never keeps any particular account of them.

*Fer.* 'Twere better if he did.

*Gov.* I say no. His open hand is his ledger, and his charities are registered on the hearts of the indigent.

*Tim.* That account is closed, Mr. Ferret:—you had better turn over a new leaf. [*Exit Timothy, L.H.*]

*Fer.* (*Looking after him.*) Puppy!—Well, Governor, you certainly have a right to approve or disapprove of your nephew's conduct, as you think proper—'tis no business of mine.

*Gov.* I know it.

*Fer.* But were he my nephew, and had I seen him watching and skulking after a poor innocent female from the country, unknown and unprotected in this great city—bribing landladies and servants to get to her apartments—

*Gov.* How! What do you say? (*Eagerly.*)

*Fer.* And on being disappointed there—shocking the modesty of a poor afflicted married woman in the same house, in which he was surprised by her husband, and called to such account, as made him cut a very silly figure—

*Gov.* What! Frank?

*Fer.* Nay, happy to part with a tolerable sum to quash the affair, and reconcile the parties,—

*Gov.* My nephew?

*Fer.* I think, in such a case, his moral character is not so highly estimable as fawners or sycophants would

describe it to you—nor does his conduct keep pace with the reputation necessary for an English merchant.

*Gov.* It's a lie, old Ferret ;—I cannot believe it !  
(*Coolly.*)

*Fer.* Yes, all are liars who do not paint this youth in all the glowing tints of fancied excellence ! I know you could devour me now—give me to your dogs—because I tell you your nephew is not an angel.

*Gov.* No—you—you mistake me ; I wou'dn't have him an angel, but I would have him a man—an honest man ; one that would set detraction at defiance—I would not have him a poor, petty, paltry cent. per cent. Gripus ;—I would have him in the most extensive sense of the word, an English merchant !—a patriotic citizen ; with skill and enterprise exerted to advance his country's prosperity, and a heart and spirit determined to maintain its honor.

*Fer.* Yet, while his wealth lasts, neither my advice, nor yours, nor the precepts of his late worthy father,—which merely serve him now as amusement for his dissolute companions,—can check his career down the hill of folly.

*Gov.* Laugh at the precepts of his father ! Can he be such a profligate ? I'll give the rascal up for ever ! My precepts, heaven knows, are sometimes whimsical enough, and, perhaps, deserve to be laugh'd at—yet not by HIM, the dog ! But his father had a wise and steady head ; he was no weathercock, like me ; he made his fortune at home at the desk, by black and white ;—damme I had nothing but blacks to make my fortune by ! (*Crosses to L.H.*) Zounds, I'm as hot as cayenne or curry-powder—and if the rascal were to come in my way now, I should—(*Enter FRANK HEARTALL, L.H. ; he runs into the Governor's open arms, who clasps him to his breast.*)—My dear, dear Frank !

*Frank H.* Uncle !—dearest uncle—best of uncles !

*Gov.* (*Almost crying.*) It's a lie, you dog !—I am the worst of uncles—for I press a profligate nephew to my bosom :—I look in his face, forget his villanies, and, unlike a parent or a friend, I uphold an impudent scoundrel, who deliberates the seduction of an innocent rustic creature, at the very moment he is destroying the peace of a distressed and wretched family.

*Frank H.* Me, uncle ? What—Mr. Ferret ? Pooh ! you are joking !

*Gov.* Only look at the rascal, now!—look at that face of innocence! Oh—you—you ugly hypocrite!

*Frank H.* Seducing rural innocence!—destroying the peace of families! Upon my soul, sir, these are serious charges? Haven't I committed murder, too?—shot a bishop's coach-horse, or fired a church?

*Fer.* Turn the matter as you please, sir; did you not, last night, dodge from the opera a lady to a house in Jer-myn-street?

*Frank H.* Yes, yes, I did—and a gentleman too;—O you sly old poacher. (*To Ferret.*)

*Gov.* Eh!—What!—What's all this?

*Fer.* Can you deny that you have this day again beset her lodgings, bribed her landlady, and—

*Frank H.* (*Crosses to centre.*) Stop, my dear fellow, stop! It's all true—I plead guilty so far; but curse me if ever I opened my lips to her. She's an angel, by heaven! fire, water, stone-walls, bolts, bars, grates, graves, or gates of adamant, shall not prevent me from an interview with that divine, that fascinating woman!

*Gov.* What the devil! The fellow's in the clouds now.

*Frank H.* O uncle! such a creature! Old Slyboots there knows her well enough! (*To Ferret.*)

*Fer.* Sir,—such observations are offensive! She is above your calumny.

*Frank H.* I know it: her mind is in her face; her eyes are mirrors that reflect her soul, her lips are truth and innocence, while each cheek presents the modest glow of health and virtue: I die for her, by heaven! I would break through all forms, and—

*Fer.* Break through all forms? Aye, sir, and insult with rude ribaldry the distresses of an unfortunate family lodged in the same house.

*Frank H.* 'Tis false, by heaven! I never yet entered the abode of the wretched to mock their miseries.

*Gov.* Answer to the charge, sir:—none of your heroics, but speak plainly; if you are scoundrel, tell me so—prove yourself a rascal, and I am satisfied.

*Frank H.* This is a land of liberty, uncle, and I have no right to criminate myself; however, thus it was—shall be my judge.

*Gov.* Speak honestly, you dog—for if the proof be

presumptive, I'll hang you on it without benefit of clergy !

*Frank H.* I am an odd fellow, uncle,—

*Gov.* You need not tell me that.

*Frank H.* I know you like me the better for it—

*Gov.* It's a lie !—but go on.

*Frank H.* At the opera, last night, I beheld an angel, in company with old Cerberus there ! (*Looking at Ferret.*) I was almost mad, I own, and would have given half my fortune to have exchanged a sentence with her :—the emblem of innocence and purity. I watched her home—marked her lodgings—then drove to my house—talked to the clerks—looked at the supper table—housekeeper inquired, if I wished for any thing particular ?—Yes, said I, a charming creature !—the woman stared—What will your honor have for supper ;—old Ferret—about two and twenty—such eyes—went to bed—tossed, tumbled, and dreamt of Arcadian beauties, sheephooks, garlands of wild daisies, and old Ferret ;—this morning attacked my fortress afresh ; it would not do—such a creature—her distress brought tears into my eyes—the sweetest little babe too—the most fascinating—and the man himself, a gentleman to all intents and purposes—overwhelmed with affliction and half mad—my heart almost beat through my bosom—I could think of nothing—all was chaos—the angel being—such a child—about two and twenty—my heart absolutely torn between love and sensibility—so that I began to—to—to—Upon my soul, uncle, I absolutely forget what I have been talking about.

*Fer.* Aye ; you make a fine story of it.

*Gov.* Why, what the devil are you at, sir ? Supping upon an old Ferret of two and twenty, and dreaming of sheephooks and daisies ! Zounds, sirrah ! do you take me for a fool or a madman ?

*Frank H.* Neither, my dear uncle, neither ; but you must not quarrel with me for little irregularities. When they become vices, consider them in their worst light, and kick me out of your doors !

*Gov.* Hey ! he begins to talk sense now.

*Frank H.* I own, I feel myself smitten with a woman, whose honorable alliance, from report, would not discredit my family, and with your leave I am determined honorably to pursue her. Is this seduction ?

*Gov.* Humph! no.

*Frank H.* I have seen a beauteous woman bathed in the tears of misery, and a man of honor driven by misfortune to despair: if, by stretching my hand with what I could well spare, I have alleviated their calamities—have I in this act meditated the destruction of their peace?

*Gov. (Feelingly.)* No.

*Frank H.* Then where's my offence, and what my punishment?

*Gov.* This! (*Embracing him.*) Live for ever in your uncle's heart! You were your father's last legacy to his loving brother—an odd, choleric, impatient, foolish old fellow, who wishes not to see his nephew resemble any other man; if you were to be exactly what I would have you, you would be—yes, you dog, you would be—damme, you'd be kick'd out of society, for not bearing a resemblance to any thing in human nature! (*Shakes his hand. Ferret during this speech gets round to L.H.*)

*Fer.* Well, Governor, it makes me more than happy to see you reconciled to your nephew. I am naturally anxious—a plain man, you know; but youth will have its fling—and the more we check it in its career, perhaps the more restive we find it.

*Frank H.* Right, Mr. Ferret; yet sly insinuation will sometimes warp the heart of benevolence, and the warm levity of youth cannot always justify its failings against the cold cautions of premeditated hypocrisy. Good morning, sir! (*Looks severely at Ferret, bows respectfully to his uncle, and exits R.H.*)

*Gov.* Eh!—what,—what's all that about hypocrisy? I don't understand—hypocrisy!

*Fer.* But I do. (*Aside.*) Nor I: your modern orators have a method of saying a number of hard words without much meaning. Good day, Governor; I have business. (*Takes the Governor's hand.*) Your nephew is a good lad—but have an eye upon him. [*Exit L.H.*]

*Gov.* Ha, ha, ha! poor honest soul! he is as watchful of that boy, and as pettish when he hears of his little errors, as his father would be: well; he shan't lose by it, for I have remembered him handsomely in my will. I should like to see this wench that Frank has fix'd his affections upon;—I warrant she's a rare one, for the rogue



has the family taste ! How the dog described her—eyes, and cheeks, and lips !—and oh, the amorous young villain ! I ought to have been his father, for I was violently in love with his mother ; but my brother, a fine, tall, handsome scoundrel, marched in like a great turkey-cock, put me aside with one of his wings, and looked as if he would gobble me up for presuming to think of such a creature ; so I retired in confusion—went to the Indies and forgot her, and led a merry bachelor's life ever since ! Merry, did I say ?—ah !—no—not merry ! I hate bachelors—that is, I mean, old single gentlemen. Then let my boy be married : he shall have a comfort that I never enjoyed myself ! Zounds, it must be a great comfort, for I have observed that even those who have the worst of it, who scold, brawl, and wrangle 'till they are black in the face, and swear never to see one another more—are miserable till they make it up, and rush again into each other's arms. A fig, then, for scolding wives, crying children, pin-money, alimony, or any money but matrimony—my boy shall be married !

[Exit L.H.]

SCENE II.—*The Widow Cheerly's Lodgings.*

*Enter the WIDOW CHEERLY and SUSAN, L.H.*

*Wid.* Nay, nay, for shame, Susan !—for shame !—What must the gentleman think ? How could you continue in conversation with a stranger, for such a length of time ?

*Susan.* La ! ma'zin,—because he talked of nothing but you.

*Wid.* Me ! why—what could a man see in me to talk about ?

*Susan.* I'm sure I can't tell, ma'am. But hi, hi, hi !—well—he's a droll one, to be sure !

*Wid.* Well, but what does he want ? Who is he ?

*Susan.* La, ma'am ! he saw you at the opera last night.

*Wid.* Aye ? Is it him ?

*Susan.* Yes, ma'am ; our landlady, Mrs. Townly, says

he is a great merchant—a banker, I believes, ma'am, in the city ; that he's the best creature in the world—every body loves him !—O ! he has call'd you such names !

*Wid.* Names !

*Susan.* Yes, ma'am ; all manner of names :—Cupids ! and Pollys ! and Florys ! and Phœbes !

*Wid.* The girl is half mad.

*Susan.* If such a sweet gentleman had said so much to me, I'm sure I should be whole mad !—ha ! ha !

*Wid.* Why, Susan, you are not in the country, now ; this is London, child !—and if all here is not deceitful, this certainly is the most disinterested placē upon the face of the globe ; every morning and evening the public prints give you caution, advice, and intelligence unsolicited ; the reviewers gratuitously tell you what books are fit for your perusal ; and almost every shopkeeper sells his goods at prime cost. What can be more liberal ?

*Susan.* La, ma'am, you're right ; it's not a bit like the country : there we are so starch'd, and so quizzical, with our double Barcelona handkerchiefs, and our long petticoats ; the ladies in Lon'on don't care who sees their necks and their ancles. I hopes never to see the filthy country again.

*Wid.* And I, Susan, am miserable until I get there. That gentleman's extraordinary conduct at the opera, last night—his eyes absolutely—Plague take the fellow ! Now he has found me out, I don't know what may be the consequence.

*Susan.* La, ma'am, he was here this morning.

*Wid.* Here !—Where ?

*Susan.* He popp'd into the gentlefolks' apartments that lodges here above, and came running out with his handkerchief to his face, and he look'd so sorrowful ! Between ourselves, ma'am, all is not right there, I believes ; far as I can larn, poor souls, all is low enough.

*Wid.* Aye, Susan ; I am but little acquainted with city manners, and though my heart feels for their distresses, it might be reckoned impertinent curiosity to inquire into their circumstances.

*Susan.* Well, ma'am ; for my part, I am but a silly country girl—I don't care about your Lon'on fashions, not I ; and I shouldn't stop a bit at flying into that there

lady's room, and popping into her lap whatever your ladyship thought proper to relieve her with; for I am sure she wants it—and I had rather she should think me unmannerly than unfeeling!

*Wid.* No, no, my girl; it must be better managed. From the glimpse I have had of her, as I passed, her appearance promises a tender sensibility; her situation must increase that feeling, and under such circumstances we cannot be too delicate.

*Susan.* That's very true, ma'am. Shall I step in and say you wish to speak with her?

*Wid.* Yes; no—stop; I'll introduce myself. (*Opens a desk, takes out a pocket-book, sits down and writes.*) You may go down, Susan.

*Susan.* Very well, ma'am. If she can relieve them, how happy it will make her! Sure as can be, that banker gentleman would assist them, if he wa'n't afraid to go about it, I warrant me. O, bless her! There would be more good servants in the world, if every poor girl had half so good a mistress. (*Aside, as she exits, L.H.*)

*Wid.* Plague take that fellow at the opera!—how the man distracts me! A banker! Aye, some fortune-hunting spendthrift, I warrant me—that has heard of a young foolish widow, fresh from the country, with a good estate in her own possession, and has set up an ideal bank, that she may give credit to his affections. When I first caught his eye, his face seemed all intelligence! and I durst not look upon him after. Heigho!—not look upon him—why? Why, because I—Devil take the fellow!—No, no, I must never be a wife again. I am spoiled for that—indulged beyond what husbands should allow, and so unrestricted, that I scarcely knew I had a husband until I lost him. Oh, heavens! what am I about? Aye,—self, self, self. In my own silly concerns I forget the distresses of my unfortunate neighbors. If I find them worthy, my purse they shall freely share; and I hope it will not prove the less acceptable, for being the widow's mite.

[*Exit, L.H.*



SCENE III.—*The Apartments of Malfort, jun.*

MR. and MRS. MALFORT *discovered.* JULIA, *dressing a doll.*

*Malf.* The more I reflect upon that stranger's generous conduct, the more my perplexity—the greater my amazement. His undisguised and easy manner, strongly indicate he had no sinister intent.

*Mrs. M.* Believe me, no—his face was the index of a benevolent heart; and as he cast a look of sorrow on our sufferings, the tear of sympathy bedewed his cheek, and almost choked his utterance.

*Julia.* Mamma, when will that good gentleman come again? I shall be so glad to see him.

*Mrs. M.* Shall you, Julia?

*Julia.* I shall, indeed, mamma!—he'll be surprised to see my new doll! I have call'd it after him!

*Mrs. M.* Indeed! Do you know his name?

*Julia.* No.

*Mrs. M.* Then what do you call your doll?

*Julia.* I call it Miss Good-gentleman! (*They smile.*)

*Wid.* (*Without, L.H.*) Very well, Susan—you'll find me here in the drawing-room.

*Malf.* A stranger's voice! Who can this be?

*Mrs. M.* Nay, I know not, my dear.

*Malf.* A lady, and coming hither! I'll retire into this closet. [*Malf. retires, taking Julia with him, at D.F. L.H.*]

*The WIDOW enters, L.H.*

*Mrs. M.* (*Curtsies.*) Madam!

*Wid.* Madam! (*Looks about as if she had mistaken the room.*) My dear madam, I beg ten thousand pardons:—this is not my apartment?

*Mrs. M.* No, madam.

*Wid.* I really know not what apology to make for this seeming intrusion.

*Mrs. M.* It requires none.

*Wid.* I am a volatile, unthinking creature, madam; a widow; but lately left upon my own hands; an estate at

my disposal, of more than I can manage. This is my first visit to London, and if my manners are rustic or unpolished, I trust your good-nature will find an excuse for them in the sincerity of my intentions.

*Mrs. M.* Oh, madam, fashion has banished ceremony; and familiarity and good-breeding are now become synonymous terms.

*Wid.* So I am told, and I am quite glad to hear it. I shall stay in London all the winter, that I may be able to take down into the country with me as many free airs and easy graces, as will completely stock the parish till the commencement of the next season.

*Mrs. M.* (*Sighing*) You have charming spirits, madam.

*Wid.* Yes, madam; an easy mind sets the imagination afloat. Those that are dull, I would fain make merry; and those that are already cheerful, I would fain keep so. Good spirits, I believe, like a good temper, cannot be well attained; they are both constitutional; and those that possess either, cannot be too thankful for the blessing.

*Mrs. M.* Yet circumstances, madam, may depress the spirits, and misfortune sour the temper. There are those who have been blessed with both, in whom they are now destroyed.

*Wid.* Aye! I would I knew them; for I have been told that I have a facility in raising the spirits, and creating good-humour, wherever I appear. I wish you could introduce me to them:—are they friends of yours?

*Mrs. M.* Yes, madam:—my nearest—dearest friends; in whose delightful society I have shared the sunshine of their splendour; and from whom, though in deepest misery, I can never depart.

*Wid.* The very beings I wish to be acquainted with: you must introduce me. Dear, dear London! You cannot meet with any thing like this in the country. Where is the use of houses, parks, woods, and orchards, where every body has houses, woods, and orchards? Bring me to the distressed and houseless; under my humble, happy roof, they shall enjoy, at least, a temporary repose; and in the interim fortune may again smile, and in her merriest mood invite them back to home, to peace, and plenty.

*Mrs. M.* You, madam, I perceive, are one of those chosen few, on whom fortune has not blindly poured her

favours. Your bounty flows from humanity's true source—the fountain of benevolence.

*Wid.* Benevolence ! not at all, madam : I am, in fact, a sensualist in the clearest sense of the word ; self-gratification is the spring of all my actions. I am young, madam, richly left, my own mistress to all intents and purposes ; why then should I think of hoarding wealth I can never want, while many, a thousand times more worthy than myself, are perishing for the means of present sustenance ? What can be more voluptuous than to behold the cripple throw by his crutch, whom your humanity has healed ?—Can luxury be more highly gratified than in viewing the famished wretch eat cheerfully of the meal your charity prepared for him ? Can the heart of vanity feel a more triumphant joy than when the unfortunate and meritorious condescend to share your roof, and smile complacent on the comforts you afford them ?

*Mrs. M.* Yours are the sentiments of true philanthropy ; modest misfortune shrinks into its dreary confine, and eats, with heavy heart, its tear-washed crust.

*Wid.* I perceive, madam, I have been guilty of intrusive impertinence. (*Preventing Mrs. M. from replying.*) Nay, I beseech you, madam,—I rattle strangely, and wish, with all my soul, I could impart to you a portion of my overflowing spirits :—but I have a sovereign remedy for vapours, if you would permit me to prescribe for you.

*Mrs. M.* The medicine that comes from so kind a physician requires no adventitious aid to make it palatable.

*Wid.* Your frankness charms me, madam. In this little family receipt-book you will find a short, but certain system to banish temporary misfortunes, and check the progress of approaching calamity. (*Mrs. M. seems to refuse it.*) Nay, madam—'tis but a short maxim—and I trust not unworthy of your perusal. If, when you know me better, yourself and friends will add to the comforts of my rural cot, by sharing all its pleasures with me, the blessing of cheerfulness shall at least attend you—we'll laugh together at the frowns of fate, and fortune herself shall not appear amongst us, unless she comes smilingly clad in the robes of good-humour. Nay, no ceremony. (*Exit, L.H.,*

*(Mrs. M. sees her to the door—curtsies.)*

*Mrs. M.* How strange is all this ; the cheerful ease—the

unaffected benevolence of that charming woman's conversation, recalls the memory of happier days, and, for a while assuages sorrow.

MALFORT *enters from the Closet. (Rings.)*

Mrs. M. And now, believe me, Henry, in the higher walks of life the greater number of our sex have hearts that feel distress, and bounteous hands outstretched for its relief, whose pride it is to succour modest genius, and bind round the brow of merit the laurel of reward. But here is the lively widow's recipe for cheerfulness—peruse it. (*Gives him the pocket-book.*)

Malf. (*He opens it, and taking from it a bank-note, looks at it with astonishment.*) A bank-note? Can it be? (*Gives it to Mrs. Malfort.*)

Mrs. M. Henry!—What—shall we?—(*As if she asked to go and return it.*)

Malf. Stay—here is something written:— (*Reads.*)

Madam,

*When we can do good, the ceremony that prevents it is wicked. From this you will understand, I have been informed that certain untoward circumstances have given a temporary derangement to your family affairs; as an immediate supply may be indispensably necessary, I have, perhaps impertinently, taken this method of presenting it. I can only be convinced that you forgive the liberty I have taken, by you and your family honoring my house in the country with your presence, until the smiles of fortune shall supersede the frowns of adversity;—where your comfort and accommodation shall be the peculiar care of her, whose heart feels the most lively sorrow at your disappointments.*

CHARLOTTE CHEERLY.

Merciful heaven!—how wondrous are thy bounties!—Wickedly desponding, I resigned myself a victim to despair—scorning the counsel of a gentle comforter, and impiously repining at the decrees of fate:—when, at the very moment that haggard Famine unveiled his care-worn face, smiling Plenty steps in to drive the monster hence—

to chide the misbelieving sufferer—and prove how dire, how deadly is his crime, who doubts the justice of unerring Providence.

[*Exeunt*, R. H.]

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Widow's Apartments.*

*The WIDOW and FRANK HEARTALL, Enter, L. H. laughing.*

*Wid.* Ha, ha, ha!—Upon my word, sir,—I perceive you are perfectly an adept in fashionable manners; and stand upon little ceremony.

*Frank H.* None at all, madam;—we merchants pride ourselves upon the bluntness of our manners, and the plainness of our dealings.

*Wid.* Indeed, sir?

*Frank H.* Yes, indeed, madam;—we'll transact you an hundred thousand pounds worth of business in a morning, without so much as a yes or a no:—the pen that crosses the mouth is an emblem of silence; but if we are compelled to answer questions, we always keep in the counting-house a dumb, but candid orator, that is sure to speak honorably for us.

*Wid.* A dumb and honorable orator! Who is that, pray?

*Frank H.* The ledger.

*Wid.* But now you are out of the counting-house, I perceive your eloquence is not of that mute nature—You are no ledger.

*Frank H.* You shall find me as faithful, madam.



*Wid.* 'Tis not my business to examine your accounts, sir—but should I bring you to book—notwithstanding all your boasted regularity, there is something in that sly countenance that tells me you have sometimes staked your credit at too great a venture. In the case of a consignment now, we'll say—For instance—a lady's heart—

*Frank H.* Oh!—Errors excepted!

*Wid.* What! you own it, do you?

*Frank H.* Yes, madam—in a mercantile way. Look you, madam: I am a plain fellow; neither more nor less than the character I boast, and hope I shall never disgrace—an English merchant. I throw down no man's enclosure, trample upon no man's corn, take nothing from the industrious labourer, pay the poor man for his work, and communicate my profit with mankind:—I trust I have a heart to succour the distressed, and what I can fairly spare I distribute freely. If you can take for granted an odd wild fellow's report of himself, there it is—you have it, madam.

*Wid.* Why, really, sir, I never heard a better character,—and if you could contrive to get it backed by the churchwardens of your parish, I might, perhaps, give a little credit to it.

*Frank H.* Well, madam—if you cannot credit the character you have just now had of me, from a devilish honest fellow, I must even refer you to your friend, Mr. Ferret. He, perhaps, may be better acquainted with me than I am with myself;—he knows me.

*Wid.* He hinted as much. (*Dryly.*)

*Frank H.* Did he? then that's all you can expect from him: he hinted to me that he knew you, but the devil a syllable more could I get out of the old close-lipped curmudgeon.

*Wid.* My situation, sir, is above disguise. I am the daughter of a gallant officer, who served his country nobly, and, retiring to the humble vale of rural seclusion, at an advanced age he died; bequeathing to his son and daughter his sole possessions—his laurels and his honor.

*Frank H.* Envidable, madam, though not substantial.

*Wid.* Now, sir, I am my own mistress—accountable for my actions to no person living.

*Frank H.* I know it.

*Wid.* I am a single woman.

*Frank H.* I know it.

*Wid.* But have been married.

*Frank H.* I know it.

*Wid.* My husband dead.

*Frank H. (Aside.)* Thank heaven!—I know that too.

*Wid.* A free, disencumbered estate—

*Frank H.* Damn the estate! I beg your pardon, ma'am, don't mention the estate. You are single—that's enough; you have been married—Did you like the state?

*Wid.* Yes—I think I did.

*Frank H.* Humph!—think you did!—Fond of your husband?

*Wid.* Humph—Y—es—I think I was :—I was married but three years—didn't see much of him.

*Frank H.* Wha—wha—what!—not in three years?

*Wid.* No—the sports of the field charmed him from his home always at day break—himself and his friends generally returned in the evening, time enough for a late dinner—drank their wine and went to bed;—the next morning—

*Frank H.* Well, madam—the next morning?

*Wid.* The same career commenced again—and so on to the end of the third chapter.

*Frank H.* And for heaven's sake, madam, how did you behave?

*Wid.* Why, sir—how should I behave?

*Frank H.* Upon my soul, I can't tell, madam—but I think I could contrive to get you a lesson in some married family between Piccadilly and Aldgate.

*Wid.* I was always happy to see him return in health and spirits. His eyes sparkled with pleasure when I met him at the gate: and, as he introduced me to each new guest, he would say, "This is my wife—look at her—she has a heart as open as my wine cellar.—My hall is heaven to me whenever I enter it.—Kiss me, my girl; make my friends welcome—and let's have a good dinner."

*Frank H.* And tho' thus neglected—you complied?

*Wid.* Neglected?—I never felt it in that sense. The strong prejudice of his education rendered his habits unconquerable; an attempt to counteract them on my side, must naturally produce strife: besides, it was his only fail-

ing ; for he was open, generous, hospitable, and manly—his whole estate was at my disposal, either to gratify my vanity in all the little time-serving fopperies of my sex, or in the more solid sensations of relieving human misery.

*Frank H.* He was a good man—upon my soul he was a good man—but rather too fond of hunting :—Had I such a wife—

*Wid.* You'd be fond of hunting too : Nay—in open defiance of the laws, trespass, perhaps, upon your neighbour's manor.

*Frank H.* Upon my word, you wrong me, madam—but your good humour charms me ; your eyes first enslaved my heart, and your temper rivets my chain ;—how shall I convince you that I love you ?

*Wid.* To what purpose would you convince me ? You have a heart ventured on another voyage : when it returns you may calculate the profit and loss ; if you find it still marketable, perhaps, the bargain may be offered—to our house.

*Frank H.* Though you speak in my own phrase, I don't understand you, madam.

*Wid.* No ?—that's surprising :—pray, sir, have you not visited another lady in this house ?

*Frank H.* Madam, a—no—ther lady ?

*Wid.* Yes,—sir,—another lady :—to whom you were pleased to say, as I am informed, abundance of civil things.

*Frank H.* Madam !

*Wid.* You were much struck with her person, and felt a lively concern for her misfortunes—

*Frank H.* Upon my honor, madam, you—you—(*Aside.*) Yes, at it again,—another scrape !

*Wid.* A husband—will sometimes be an unmannerly intruder ; and if a gentleman can sneak out of such a situation in a whole skin—

*Frank H.* He certainly has no right to be displeased with his adventure.

*Wid.* Am I right, sir ?

*Frank H.* Yes, madam, the entries are pretty fair—but as to the sum total—

*Wid.* Oh !—Errors excepted !

*Frank H.* Ha, ha, ha ! That I have accidentally



conversed with a lady in this house, does not admit of a doubt : but let the result of that interview be what it may—my heart approves, and my conscience cannot reproach me with it.

*Enter GEORGE, L. H.*

*Geo.* Mrs. Malfort, if you are alone, madam, would speak with you on particular business.

*Wid. (Aside.)* Now for it !—I am alone : beg of her to step in.

*[Exit George, L. H.]*

*Frank H.* I'll retire, madam.

*Wid.* Oh, by no means ! You know the lady.

*Frank H.* Not I, madam. Malfort ! I know no lady of the name.

*Wid. (Significantly.)* Indeed, sir ?

*Frank H.* No ; indeed, madam—I have heard my uncle mention a gentleman of that name, a very intimate friend of his, now, I believe, in the Indies.

*Wid.* But no lady of that name comes within the circle of your acquaintance ?

*Frank H.* No, upon my honor, madam.

*Enter MRS. MALFORT, L. H.*

*(Widow receives her with great cordiality.)*

*Wid.* My dear Mrs. Malfort, ten thousand welcomes.—Mr. Heartall—Mrs. Malfort. *(Introducing her, and looking significantly at Heartall.)*

*Frank H.* This Mrs. Malfort ?—Madam—I—I—am happy to—*(Confused and bowing.)*

*Mrs. M.* Sir—the pleasure of this opportunity—is—a—circumstance that—

*Frank H.* My dear madam, don't mention it—I wish—I wish entirely to—I wish—*(Aside.)* I wish the ice was set in, and I was over head and ears in the New River !

*Wid.* You don't know the lady, sir ;—what is the matter with you ?

*Frank H.* In for it again ! *(Aside.)*

*Mrs. M.* Madam—after a fair perusal of your book—by

which I have marked indelibly the spirit of its contents upon my heart—I beg to return it unimpaired!—unless the tear of gratitude may have soiled the leaf whereon the hand of benevolence had written its inscription.

*Wid.* My dear Mrs. Malfort—we'll talk over that matter another time ; I positively cannot receive it now. Do you know, madam, that this gentleman has been making a tender of his affections to me, with all the freedom of an old dangler—tho,' bless the man ! I hav'n't known him above a dozen hours.

*Mrs. M.* Some men, madam, are easier known in that short space, than others in half a century. The woman who dares entrust her heart to that gentleman,—will, in my mind, find a heart to keep it company.

*Wid.* A great many, I believe, madam : Oh, he looks like a young Blue-Beard !—a fellow that has no more mercy upon poor women's hearts, than his predecessor had upon their heads.

*Frank H.* Upon my word, madam, this is cruel : I am much afraid you have had but an indifferent character of me.

*Wid.* My good friend, I have had no character at all of you : You must positively get a certificate from your last place before I can take you into my service.

*Enter GEORGE, L. H.*

*Geo.* A servant from your uncle, sir,—says he knows you are here, and must see you directly.

*(Frank H. going to cross, is prevented by the Widow.)*

*Wid.* You positively must not stir. Send the servant up.

*[Exit George, L. H.]*

*Frank H.* My dear madam, permit me to see him below-stairs. He is the strangest creature—

*Wid.* No, no ; let us have him. I like strange creatures. Be thankful ; it mends your chance.

*Enter TIMOTHY, L. H.*

*Frank H.* What, Timothy ! you have found me out ?

*Tim.* Yes, sir ; we have ferreted you !

*Frank H.* What, I am obliged to him,—am I ?

*Tim.* If you think it an obligation, there it is due.

*Frank H.* I am afraid I owe him many such.

*Tim.* I believe you do. I don't know what he has been saying, but the Governor blows a tornado : he has been in five and twenty humours in three and twenty minutes—I left him ordering the carriage ; he swears he'll follow, and blow you up as high as Cape Finisterre. So I thought I'd trot on before, and give you the hard word.

*Frank H.* Thank you, Timothy ; you are an honest fellow.

*Tim.* Not I, bless you ; I'm no honest fellow. I am as great a rogue as old Ferret ; only it's in another kind of way.

*Wid.* Indeed, Mr. Timothy ?

*Tim.* Fact, madam : I'm a very great villain—If I did not every night persuade my master that his nephew was a most consummate scoundrel, no rhetoric would convince him in the morning that he was an honest man.

*Wid.* Ha, ha, ha ! But if he acts so much by contraries, how can Ferret's insinuations injure his nephew ?

*Tim.* Because, ma'am—they are insinuations—damnable hints—and diabolical inuendoes :—never speaks bolt outright !—a toad in a hole, that spits his venom all around him, but can't get out of his circle.

*Wid.* Ha, ha, ha ! You have a pleasant time of it among them all, Mr. Timothy !

*Tim.* Bless you, ma'am, I like it. I am an odd fish, master says, and love to swim in troubled waters. I never laugh at his good-humours, nor frown at his infirmities ; I always keep a sober steady phiz—fix'd as the gentleman's on horseback at Charing-Cross : and in his worst of humours, when all is fire and fagots with him, if I turn round and coolly say, " Lord, sir, has any thing ruffled you ?" he'll burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter, and exclaim, " Curse that inflexible face of thine, though you never suffer a smile to mantle on it, yet it is a figure of fun to all the rest of the world !" (*All laugh.*)

*Wid.* This gentleman, I presume, Mr. Timothy, is rather a favorite of yours.

*Tim.* I can't tell, madam ; I have fought many a battle

for him, and I am afraid there will be many more fought on his account, when the ladies begin to know him about half as well as I do.

*Wid.* Ha, ha, ha! What, are the ladies to quarrel about him too?

*Tim.* Yes; I think there will be some pulling of caps! but all for the good of trade; the destruction of lace will draw down the blessing of Bond street on him.

*Frank H.* Well, Timothy, I shall see the Governor, and try to appease his wrath.

*Tim.* I am going: I see what you are about here; a fine creature—lucky rogue! but mum—I say nothing.

*Frank H.* Well, well; you are a good fellow, Timothy, and I shall find a time to reward your kindness.

*Tim.* Don't mention it: I have taken the liberty of trotting hither on a message of self-gratification—when I am sent on one, I shall be proud to taste the sweets of your honor's bounty. [Exit, L.H.]

*Frank H.* Ha, ha, ha! Poor Timothy!

*Wid.* Upon my word, this Mr. Ferret, seems a dangerous man. But he is one of my husband's executors, and under his protection I am here.

*Frank H.* I should like to take the trouble off his hands. Cou'dn't you make a transfer?

*Wid.* Do you hear him, Mrs. Malfort? Transfer!—I shall never be able to keep this poor man out of the stocks.

*Frank H.* In plain English, madam—I love you—with all the sincerity and honor of an honest man.

*Wid.* Lord a'mercy! what is the creature at?

*Frank H.* That best of men, my uncle, is deluded by a fiend—whose schemes I could instantly counteract; but must not, in pity to an old man's caprice; for though I am independent of my uncle's wealth, I am not of his affection.

*Wid.* Give me leave to ask, who is your uncle, sir?

*Frank H.* A gentle-hearted humourist, madam; old Governor Heartall.

*Wid.* Late from India?

*Frank H.* But a few years since, madam.

*Wid.* (*Aside.*) Heavens! the most intimate friend of my father.

*Gov.* (*Within, L.H.*) Here?—What, here—in this apartment? A rascal! a dog!

*Wid.* What bustle is this?

*Frank H.* My dear madam—it is my uncle—(*Aside.*) What the devil shall I do?—For heaven's sake, madam, excuse the frailties of age—forgive the whimsicalities of a poor old man!

*Wid.* Don't fidget yourself—'tis hard, indeed, if I can't manage an old man.

GOVERNOR *enters, L.H., followed by FERRET; they go over to R.H.; FRANK H. crosses behind to L.H.*

*Gov.* A scoundrel!—a sneaking, lying villain!—all cant and hypocrisy! to ruin families by wholesale. Where is this widow witch?

*Wid.* Mr. Ferret—you were my husband's executor—I didn't know you were my groom of the chambers also. (*With asperity.*)

*Fer.* Madam—I am naturally anxious: when I know the nephew of my friend is rendering himself odious or contemptible, I stand upon no ceremony to reclaim him.

*Frank H.* (*Aside.*) I shall never keep my temper—I must cut that fellow's throat.

*Gov.* Madam, I ask your pardon; I perceive I have press'd in rudely here.

*Wid.* Sir, you are most heartily welcome: I have often heard my late much-lov'd father mention Governor Heartall—with more than pleasure, with the affection of a sincere friend.

*Gov.* Ay—indeed! Who was he, pray?

*Wid.* Colonel Woodley.

*Gov.* What, Jack?—honest Jack—worthy Jack—Jack Woodley? Old Ferret, is this the widow?

*Fer.* Yes. (*Dryly, on R.H.*)

*Gov.* Ay? (*Looking stedfastly at her.*) I can't perceive that malignant smile, that devil in her countenance, which you say is the sure index of a shrew, and must render a husband miserable.

*Fer.* (*Harshly.*) Put on your spectacles.

*Gov.* I will. (*He takes out his spectacles; while he rubs*



*the glasses with his handkerchief, the Widow, smothering a laugh, turns up the stage; F. Heartall advances and takes her place—the Governor puts on his spectacles, and turning to look at the Widow, sees F. Heartall.)* Why, sirrah!—are you not a villain? confess yourself a scoundrel. You would unite yourself to a profess'd termagant, whose tongue has already sent to an early grave, a loving husband—and thus embitter all your future days: a Xantippe—(*Frank Heartall, hurt at the Governor's reproaches, turns up the stage, and Mrs. Malfort comes into his place, as if she meant to mediate for him.*) An angel!—madam, I beg a million of pardons—(*F. Heartall comes down on the other side, the Widow between him and the Governor, who turns that way, supposing F. Heartall next him.*) A rascal! to fix his affections on a devil incarnate—A cherub! by all that's heavenly! (*Ferret retires, and sits at L.H. side of the table.*)

*Wid.* (*Aside to F. Heartall.*) Oh, I see—I see it all now! I have caught his humour, and shall have some sport with him. (*Aloud.*) Did I ever tell you that story, my dear madam, of my father, Colonel Woodley?

*Gov.* What, a story about Jack? Come, let us hear it.

*Wid.* It is a Bengal story, sir; a great way off.

*Gov.* So much the better; now for it.

*Wid.* Well, sir, thus it was. One summer's evening, after a hard day's march over burning sands, and expansive wilds—fatigued and weary, the Colonel and his hungry regiment, with all their little train of tired women and poor children, faint and exhausted, 'spied the mansion of a certain Governor.

*Gov.* This is a good one—go on—ha, ha, ha!—Poor Jack!

*Wid.* The Colonel dispatched one of his sergeants to say that Woodley and his hungry soldiers rested on their arms at the Governor's gate. "What, Jack?" said the Governor—

*Gov.* "Honest Jack?" said the Governor—"worthy Jack?"

*Wid.* "Jack and his soldiers hungry?" said the Governor. "Yes, please your honor," said the serjeant, "and their wives and children too." "I am glad of it, for here is plenty; let the rogues come in," said the Governor:—



"my delight is to see the hungry feed, and shield from inclemency the limbs of the naked,"—

*Gov.* Said the Governor: the little drummers mustered up all the strength they had left, and beat up such a tantarara! while the poor soldiers, and the women, shouted till my plantation echoed again!

*Wid.* Yours, sir? (*Pretending surprise.*)

*Frank H.* Yours, uncle?

*Gov.* Yes, mine, you dog! I marched down the avenue to usher them in: the women fell upon their knees, poor things, and prayed, and blessed me as they entered; their parched lips could scarcely give vent to the feelings of their hearts, but their streaming eyes spoke volumes of thanksgiving.

*Wid.* (*To Mrs. Malfort.*) Now, observe. (*Aloud.*) Aye, sir; but the serjeant's wife!

*Gov.* Ay, that was the best of all—Poor soul!—she was sinking beneath the weight of two fine children; I just hobbled up time enough to catch her falling burden, and bore the little chubby rogues triumphantly in my arms! They look'd delighted at each other, played with my hair, kissed my forehead, and, with their little fat fingers wiped the tears that fell from my old eyes as large as hailstones. My myrmidons fed, and drank, and laughed, and sang,—talked their little wars and battles over—then slept; and next day set freshly forward on their march, rattling their drums, blowing their cheerful fifes, with loud huzzas of gratitude to the donor of their feast. (*They turn up the stage.*)

*Fer.* (*Coming forward, L.H.*) This Bengal story has warmed the old fool's heart, and they may now mould the driveller to what shape they please. I will leave him to his fate; and trust to occurrences for the completion of my purposes.

[*Exit Ferret, L.H., unobserved.*

(*Governor, &c. come down.*)

*Frank H.* And now, my dear uncle, what new offence have I committed?—Any more murders come out?—Children strangled, or idiots defrauded of their property?

*Gov.* Are you not going to marry a vixen?

*Frank H.* Guilty. I would marry if I could.

*Gov.* What! a vixen?

*Frank H. (Looking at the Widow.)* I think not : but there I must run my chance, as my father did before me.

*Gov.* Your father ? he married a celestial being—a seraph ! Whom would you marry ? (*Frank H. takes the Widow by the hand, and points to her.*) A seraph, too ! Will you have him, madam ? Will you take pity on the scoundrel ?—will you—will you ? The rogue loves you ; I am sure he does ; he has a good fortune, and shall have more when I die.

*Frank H.* Now, sir, you are yourself : you are again my kind, dear uncle. (*Going to embrace him, the Governor avoids it.*)

*Gov.* It's a lie ! I had forgot ; don't have him ; he don't deserve you ! I am not your dear uncle. I will be uncle to no villain ; that takes the advantage of a poor gentleman's distress, to make dishonorable advances to his afflicted wife.

*Wid.* Heavens !—

*Gov.* But where is this offended female ? I must heal this breach ; and by my bounty prove there is at least one good heart in my family.

*Mrs. M.* That is already proved—incontestibly proved by your injured nephew.

*Wid.* How ?

*Mrs. M.* In the very moment of direst calamity, this gentleman entered by chance our mansion of despair ; he saw my grief, perceived my husband's agony, his heart melted, and his eyes overflowed ; he bounteously relieved our wants—concealing even where our thanks should rest, and made my child the agent of his munificence.

*Gov.* I am his uncle !

*Wid.* This is a noble-hearted fellow ! (*Aside.*)—(*To F. Heartall.*) I beg your pardon, sir, I was taught to think differently of you. Come, Governor, let us all be friends, will you ? will you ? (*Wheedling and imitating.*) Ah ! I wish my father was alive, to back my suit !

*Gov.* Your father ? let me look at you ; you are Jack Woodley's daughter. (*Smiling on her.*) I lov'd your father---

*Wid.* Yes ; and you will love my father's daughter, when you know me better.

*Gov.* Shall I ? Eh !

*Wid.* To be sure you will ; nay, you must, in common gratitude, for I love an old bachelor, in my heart.

*Gov.* That's more than I do.

*Wid.* Ah ! I should like to spend a long winter's evening with you, and talk over your old conquests ; the women that died on your account, and the unfortunate damsels that you betrayed. O, you look like a seducer !

*Gov.* Humph ! You are a rogue—a pretty rogue—an arch little villain.

*Mrs. M.* If ever two hearts were designed by Providence to make each other supremely blest, surely, sir, it is your generous nephew and this benevolent lady.

*Gov.* What you, too ? (*To Mrs. M.*) Give me your hands ! Must I forgive the rascal ?—must I girls ?—shall I lasses ?

*Wid.* Forgive, sir ?—you have failed in proof ; you have lost your cause ; you are nonsuited !

*Frank H.* Yes, uncle, a flaw in the indictment !

*Gov.* Then you shall have a new trial, you rogue ! But zounds ! if these are your advocates, I shall give up the contention : against such pleaders, justice should be deaf as well as blind. Mercy on me ! when I look on these creatures' faces, and hear the music of their tongues, I am astonished that there can remain on the earth's habitable surface, so helpless a creature as an old bachelor.

*MALFORT enters, L.H., greatly agitated ; a letter in his hand.*

*Malf.* Madam—I have to solicit your pardon, for thus abruptly breaking in among your friends ; but a circumstance has occurred that—

*Mrs. M.* (*Under the impression of surprise and uneasiness, introducing him.*) Madam, my husband, Mr. Malfort—

*Wid.* Sir, I am happy to see you, pray walk in.

[*Exit, L.H.*

*Malf.* (*Bowing.*) Madam, I—(*To F. Heartall, who is R.H.*) Sir, the contents of this letter—concern you :—and lest the warmth and agitation of my mind should urge me

on to acts of sudden desperation—I beseech you, read it—and declare how you think a man of honor ought to act under circumstances so repulsive to his feelings? (*Gives F. Heartall the letter.*)

*Frank H. (Reads.)* Sir,—Under the deep disguise of affected benevolence, young Heartall has designs of an infamous nature upon your wife. If your distresses have so absorbed your feelings, that you can become a tame witness of your own dishonor, you will of course have no objection to his frequent visits to the house you lodge in—where he has now established a footing, under pretence of paying his addresses to a silly young widow, from the country—who wants knowledge of the world, to penetrate the depth of his designs. I know the man—therefore take this timely hint, from a sincere, though concealed, friend.

*Mrs. M.* Merciful heavens!—what can this mean?

*Malf. (During the reading of the letter, fixes his eyes upon F. Heartall, who appears agitated, distressed, and indignant.)* Sir;—(*As if he waited for Frank Heartall's answer.*)

*Frank H.* Really, sir,—this extraordinary—business—is—a—

*Malf.* Before I proceed, sir, to further question—this folded paper contains the bill which your pretended benevolence would have applied to the relief of my distresses; take it, sir,—it is yours. (*Gives a paper.*) You cannot, I perceive, deny the foul charge alleged against you: that you do not endeavor to extenuate it by false asseveration, I applaud you for—and although I cannot but doubt the courage of him, who, with cold and deliberate villany, can wear the mask of charity to hide adulterous seduction, and meanly assume the garb of munificence to cover purposes detestable and base, I shall expect such ample retribution, as insulted pride and injured honor should demand.

*Frank H.* Mr. Malfort, I am at length recovered from my confusion and astonishment: this false and scandalous aspersion causes no other impulse in my mind, than that of sorrow and regret, that any of heaven's creatures can be so lost to feeling and humanity as the author of this black scroll. Had I been wretch enough to perpetrate the wrong you charge me with, I hope I should be coward enough not to defend it—nor oppose a pistol against that

man's head, whose heart I had already wounded. Before this company, further explanation is unnecessary :—I am to be found, sir, whenever it shall suit you.

[ *Crosses, and exit, L.H.*

(*Malfort walks about in great agitation.*)

*Mrs. M.* Henry !—what shall I say ?—can you believe me base ?—

*Malf.* Oh ! that Providence would snatch from the earth a wretch torn with conflicting passions, and suffering under all the pangs of penury, and approaching misery !

*Gov.* (*On L.H.*) My heart tells me that my boy is innocent ! The rogue is wild—the dog is ungovernable—but he has a heart : I feel it in my own, warm as blood can make it. I could sometimes kill the villain myself—but that I know he has a heart ! And now I have looked upon his honest face, and will stake my life upon his honor !

*Malf.* 'Tis a world of error, sir,—stake your life on no man's honor, nor rest your faith on woman's virtue ! All, all is false, deceiving, treacherous, and subtle. (*Crosses to L.H.*) O, agony of thought ! Destruction pours her measureless weight of woes upon my head ! Where is now my solace ? Domestic confidence is fled ; my home is hell—suspicion darts her scorpion stings into my brain, and all is madness, frenzy, and despair ! [*Exit Malfort, L.H.*

*Mrs. M.* O Henry—O my husband !

(*Following him, she is nearly fainting : when the Widow enters, L.H., and prevents her falling.*)

*Wid.* Nay, madam—stay, I beseech you, stay,—this sudden shock bears heavy on your spirits :—whither would you go ?

*Mrs. M.* Alas ! I know not, madam ! I would seek my husband—I would calm his mind—I would pour consolation on his sorrows—

*Wid.* With your leave, sir, we will retire : and devise such means as shall restore Mr. Malfort to peace and comfort.

*Gov.* Let Jack Woodley's daughter command old Heartall as she will : (*To Mrs. Malfort.*) Come—cheer up, madam ! while the old Governor can command a rupee,



by heaven neither you nor yours shall ever want a part of it :—then set her spirits afloat—cheer her up, my lively widow !

*Wid.* You hear, madam, you hear the Governor's commands—no disobedience of orders—I am a soldier's daughter, and used to discipline.

“ *Mrs. M.* I am already animated by your words :—  
“ but my gratitude masters my utterance ; let my tears,  
“ therefore, speak what my tongue cannot.

“ *Wid.* Come, madam,—we'll soon dry your tears, and  
“ set your tongue in motion. I wish to exhilarate the  
“ spirits of my hearers, not depress them : I can laugh at  
“ folly, pity depravity, scorn knavery, and detest villany !  
“ The merry heart has not leisure to be vicious ; and as  
“ the smile that marks a cheerful countenance is easily  
“ discerned from the fawning grin of hypocrisy, I am in-  
“ fallible in the choice of my friends, and all is laugh  
“ around me.

“ *Gov.* Brava ! Bravissima ! my charming widow.

[*Exeunt*, L.H.]

#### END OF ACT III.

### ACT IV.

#### SCENE I.—*A Street in London.*

*Enter* CHARLES WOODLEY and THOMAS, R.H. (*with a parcel.*)

*Cha.* Thomas !

*Tho.* Sir.

*Cha.* Step to the St. James's Hotel, and desire Osborne to get ready apartments for me directly ; I have a call or two to make, and shall be there presently.



*Tho.* Very well, your honor. But where shall I deliver this packet for your sister, sir? There is no direction on it, further than her name.

*Cha.* Plague take it! I don't know what we are to do in that case, for I have positively lost her address. Hark'ee, Thomas, I have it. You must call at the Stock Exchange, and inquire where Mr. Ferret lives—any body there will tell you; he is one of my late brother-in-law's executors, and will inform you where my sister, Mrs. Cheerly, is to be found: be particular in taking her address, and bring it with you to the hotel.

*Tho.* I shall, sir.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

*Cha.* I long to see the giddy romp! She has been both a wife and a widow since we parted; but, if I can trace her disposition from her letters, she is still lively and unchanged. Certainly she was formed in nature's merriest mood; for I never yet saw her uneasy or dejected.

*Enter FRANK HEARTALL, L.H.; crossing the stage hastily.*

Eh! whom have we here? What, Frank Heartall!—an old acquaintance, faith! I suppose I am grown quite out of his knowledge. (*Goes up to F. Heartall.*) Pray, sir, what is't o'clock? in traveling I neglected winding my watch. (*Taking out his watch.*)

*Frank H.* Sir, by me—(*Looking at his watch—then at Charles.*) It is now exactly—its monstrous like him, if he was not so tall. (*Aside.*)

*Cha.* (*Looking in Heartall's face, and holding his key to his watch, as if to set it.*) What hour did you say, sir?

*Frank H.* (*To himself.*) Six:—yes—it must be—six—years since we met.

*Cha.* Six! my dear sir, it is impossible: it can scarcely be three yet.

*Frank H.* O! I beg your pardon, sir. I say, Charles—

*Cha.* But I beg your pardon—and I say, Frank—

*Frank H.* It is above six years, since we both left old Gradus, at Westminster.

*Cha.* Is it?—Heartall.

*Frank H.* It is.—Woodley—damme, I'm right!

*Cha.* And so am I: ha, ha! (*Shaking hands affectionately.*) I knew you at the first glimpse; but my

marchings and counter-marchings have worn me out of the knowledge of my nearest acquaintance.

*Frank H.* I have often thought of you, upon my soul, and reflected frequently with pleasure upon our little youthful sallies: the "hair-breadth 'scapes" that we have had. I have paid for many of your pranks, my boy.

*Cha.* You certainly were a most unfortunate youth—always in some scrape—ha, ha, ha!

*Frank H.* It sticks to me still, Charles. My old luck: I never shall get rid of it.

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Frank H.* Yes; you may laugh—but it is truth, upon my soul.

*Cha.* The little harmless frolics of your youth, Frank, should serve us for laughter in our maturer days. But what is the matter now? Have you lost your youthful spirits? or is there, really, any thing that can possibly give you serious concern?

*Frank H.* Yes, Charles: I'm in for it again.

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Frank H.* Don't laugh—don't, Charles. Upon my soul, I am a wretched fellow. (*Charles laughs.*) What! you will laugh?

*Cha.* Why, who the devil can help laughing?—to hear a fellow like you, basking in the sunshine of a splendid fortune; that fortune every hour in a state of continued accumulation; an old rich uncle, that will leave you every shilling; living in luxury and ease, in the very centre of your friends and connexions; the treasures of all parts of the habitable earth pouring in upon you; and hear you talk of wretchedness! Zounds! it would make a stoic laugh—ha, ha, ha!

*Frank H.* Yes: this is all very fine!

*Cha.* It is all very true, however.

*Frank H.* So it is, Charles: and yet I am a wretched fellow!

*Cha.* Not in love, I hope!

*Frank H.* Over head and ears!—but that's not the worst of it.

*Cha.* No!—Ha, ha, ha!—then you are a miserable fellow, sure enough. Ha, ha, ha!—Who is the lady, Frank?

*Frank H.* An angel !

*Cha.* Oh, that of course ! Do I know her ?

*Frank H.* No ; this is her first visit to London.

*Cha.* Indeed ?

*Frank H.* Yes : she is a widow.

*Cha.* The devil she is ! and her name ?

*Frank H.* Cheerley.

*Cha.* (*Aside.*) My mad-cap sister, by heaven !

*Frank H.* Such a woman, Charles—uniting truth, virtue, sense, with all the livelier graces of her sex !

*Cha.* Where does she live, Frank ? You must introduce me.

*Frank H.* No, Charles, you must excuse me there :—Ha, ha, ha !—the truth is, I can't introduce you, for I am in disgrace there myself.

*Cha.* Ay !—(*Forgetting himself.*) You surely have not presumed to—(*Recollecting.*) I mean,—what have you done to incur her displeasure ?

*Frank H.* Nothing.

*Cha.* If she be the creature you describe, she cannot be so ridiculously capricious as to take offence at nothing.

*Frank H.* I don't say that she is offended. Nay, I live in hopes to the contrary. But somehow or other—I have been unfortunately betrayed, it seems, into the perpetration of a benevolent action ; and, because I will not allow that I have committed that wicked deed through the worst of motives, namely, the seduction of a suffering, virtuous wife—I, at this very period, am under momentary expectation of having my throat cut—by an offended husband.

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha ! Upon my soul, Frank, this is one of your extraordinary scrapes, sure enough ! But come, you must introduce me to your widow.

*Frank H.* No, no, Charles ; I know better, believe me.

*Cha.* I must see her, Frank. By all the powers of affection, I love her already.

*Frank H.* Pooh ! pooh ! nonsense—You don't—

*Cha.* I do, by Jupiter. Ha, ha, ha ! what young fellow could avoid it, that had but heard your description of the charming creature ?

*Frank H.* Did I describe her so warmly ?

*Cha.* Did you ! Zounds ! you have set my imagination

in a blaze ! I long to see her, and must and will find her out !

*Frank H.* No—you won't—Ha, ha, ha !

*Cha.* Yes, I will—Ha, ha, ha !

*Enter TIMOTHY, R.H. (Crossing the stage.)*

*Frank H.* Tim ! Timothy ! Where are you hurrying, my old boy ?

*Tim.* (*Staring.*) Hey ! Sir ! Did you speak to me ? Lord ! I ask pardon, sir—as the man in the play says, “ my grief was blind, and did not see you.” Heigho !

*Frank H.* Nay, but communicate, Timothy ; what is the matter ? Nothing serious, I hope ?

*Tim.* Yes, sir—serious—very serious—it must be serious, for it makes me laugh ; he, he, he !—Heigho !

*Frank H.* Tim ; it must be serious, indeed, if you smile ! but I am afraid it must be a general calamity, a universal extermination—for you absolutely laughed.

*Tim.* Did I ? Lord, lord ! how misfortunes unbend the mind ! Laugh ? I didn't mean it : I should not have smiled, but for the dreadful distress of two near relations, that I have just now left behind me at the door of a prison.

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha ! what the devil does he mean ?

*Frank H.* Hush ! let him alone. Relations of yours in a prison ?—How ?—For what, Timothy ?

*Tim.* Suspicion of debt. Poor things ! but if they will go bail for distressed families, and bind themselves for such enormous sums, they must expect no better.

*Frank H.* A prison ! And are they really related to you, Timothy ?

*Tim.* Yes, sir, almost ; one is my brother, and the other is my old aunt.

*Frank H.* And engaged themselves for enormous sums, —I am sorry for it.

*Tim.* I knew you would, sir :—fifteen pounds seven is a serious concern.

*Both.* Ha, ha, ha !

*Frank H.* Fifteen pounds ! for shame, Timothy—pay it ; pay it, Timothy ; and give them their freedom.

*Tim.* Pay it ? Hadn't I better discharge the national

debt at the same time ; bid for the loan ; or buy up the next lottery ? I have had a cursed quarrel as I came along, too ; that was the reason that I didn't know you at first.

*Cha.* A quarrel, sir ? With whom ?

*Tim.* With myself, to be sure :—" Tim," said I to myself, " Ask your master : he'll lend you the cash in a moment." " I know that," says I to Tim, " and that is the reason I won't ask it." Then Tim says, with great feeling, " Will you let your relations rot in a prison ?" Says I,— " Mr. Tim ; I have given all I could rap and rend to those relations, and have not left a farthing to bless myself with : what can I do more ?"— " But you shall do more !" Well, one word brought on another, between myself and me : and, in my passion, as I passed through St. Martin's Court, I ran my head full-butt into the stomach of an old clothesman ; tumbled him and myself over a wheel-barrow ; and getting up, awoke, as I thought, out of the strangest dream I ever had in my life.

*Frank H.* Take this note ; change it ; release your relations ; and with the remainder of twenty pounds, make them as comfortable as you can.

*Tim.* Sir ! Mr. Frank !—don't joke !—I can't laugh—I would speak, sir, but—I burn all over—I shall blaze presently :—No ; my eyes are sending a couple of engines to my relief :—pump away—pump away—you may prevent a conflagration.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

*Frank H.* Poor Timothy ! his silence was more eloquent than words.

*Cha.* Well, adieu, Frank, for the present. (*Crosses to L.H.*) I have business ; but shall easily find you—if I miss seeing you at the widow's.

*Frank H.* Seeing me at the widow's ? that's very well, Charles : but I'll take care to prevent that.

*Cha.* And I to further it. Rely upon it, I shall meet you there.

*Frank H.* And if you do, by heaven, I'll cut your throat !

*Cha.* No, you won't : your description has set me on fire, you rogue ! It is merely in friendship to you that I visit your widow—to prevent you from getting into another scrape.



*Frank H.* A scrape ! what scrape ?

*Cha.* The worst of scrapes—matrimony.

[*Exeunt, Charles L.H., Frank, R.H.*]

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“ SCENE II.—*Malfort's Lodgings.*

“ *Enter the WIDOW and MR. and MRS. MALFORT, R. H.*

“ *Wid.* I am happy, my dear Mr. Malfort, that reason once more resumes her seat ; and now let us drop this sombre subject, I beseech you. Pray, what would you advise me to do with this extraordinary lover of mine ? He really talks as if he was in earnest ; as if he was desperate enough to marry !

“ *Mrs. M.* That he loves you, I believe, admits not of a question.

“ *Malf.* And that he would instantly give the most unequivocal assurance of his passion, is as palpable.

“ *Wid.* Oh, yes ;—I believe the creature is serious enough : but he is charged on all sides with various crimes and enormities. You certainly would not advise me to take a culprit to my heart ?

“ *Enter MRS. TOWNLY, L. H.*

“ *Mrs. T. (To the Widow.)* There is a young gentleman below, madam, who earnestly desires to see you.

“ *Wid.* Mr. Heartall ?

“ *Mrs. T.* No, madam, an officer ; he would have followed me up stairs without ceremony, but I told him you were not in your own apartments.

“ *Wid.* Where is he ?

“ *Mrs. T.* In the little parlour, madam.

“ *Wid.* I'll wait on him. [*Exit, Mrs. Townly, L. H.*]  
“ Will you excuse me for a moment ? (*Mrs. Malfort curt-sies.*) An officer ! bless me, who can it be ? No matter ! I am a soldier's daughter, and these sons of scarlet have no terrors for me !—from my earliest day I have



" been taught to love, to honor, and respect them ; and  
 " when I read, or hear, that an accomplished woman has  
 " bestowed her hand and fortune on a brave and honest  
 " soldier, I feel she has done her duty ; and, like a true  
 " patriot, paid her portion of a nation's gratitude.

" [*Exit*, L.H.

" *Mrs. M.* Well, my Henry,—are not now your sus-  
 " picions of Heartall removed ?

" *Malf.* I fain would think so :—I wish to banish all ill  
 " thoughts of that man ; and press him to my bosom, as  
 " my friend, my preserver !

" *Re-enter* MRS. TOWNLY, L. H.

" *Mrs. T.* Mr. Ferret, sir, wishes to speak a word  
 " with you.

" *Malf.* Ferret ? I have some faint recollection of such  
 " a name, that was my father's friend :—What can this  
 " mean ?—I'll wait upon him. [*Exit, Mrs. Townly*, L.H.]  
 " Come, my Harriet ! cheerly, my love ! I trust, misfor-  
 " tune lags in pace, and smiling competence will shortly  
 " overtake her. [*Exeunt*, L.H.

### SCENE III.—*The Widow's Apartments.*

*Enter the Widow, laughing, and* CHARLES WOODLEY,  
 R.H.

*Cha.* I knew I should surprise you : I therefore avoided  
 writing, or giving you the smallest information of my arri-  
 val in England. But I perceive marriage has not tamed  
 you, nor widowhood dejected your spirits : you are still  
 the same giddy, lovely, generous madcap.

*Wid.* Exactly, Charles.

*Cha.* But no mischief in the wind, I hope ? No new  
 conquest meditated ?

*Wid.* No :—nothing new ;—the mischief is already  
 done !

*Cha.* Indeed !

*Wid.* Yes, indeed :—I am afraid I am gone again.

*Cha.* What — married again ?

*Wid.* No, not yet :—Charles—will you give me leave to ask a question ?

*Cha.* Certainly.

*Wid.* Have you ever been in action ?

*Cha.* In action ! how do you mean ?

*Wid.* Pooh ! You have not been so long a soldier without some fighting, I suppose ?

*Cha.* No, faith :—I have had my share of danger, and have fortunately escaped with unfractured bones.

*Wid.* Then you may form some idea of my situation. Before the action, a general's anxiety must be dreadful—so is mine ! Come—as a soldier's daughter, I'll state the case in your own way :—We will suppose my heart a citadel, a remarkably strong fortress—its outworks, in my mind, as impenetrable as the rock of Gibraltar. Now, an excellent commander, and an able engineer, sits down before this well-defended garrison ; he pours in shells of flattery, which waste themselves in the air, and do no farther mischief. He then artfully dispatches two of his aid-de-camps, in the disguise of charity and benevolence, to sap the foundation, and lay a train for the demolition of the garrison ; which train, to his own confusion, hypocrisy blows up, and leaves the fortress still besieged, but not surrendered.

*Cha.* But, I suppose, you mean to surrender—at discretion.

*Wid.* No : capitulate—upon honorable terms.

*Cha.* Bravo, sister ! You are an excellent soldier !—But, who is this formidable foe ? Can I find his name in the army-list ?

*Wid.* No : in the London Directory more likely.

*Cha.* What ? A merchant ?

*Wid.* I believe so : the man deals in indigo, cotton, rice, coffee, and brown sugar.

*Cha.* Indeed ! and his name ?

*Wid.* (*With an arch laugh.*) Ay !—there you are puzzled ! Now, what's his name ?

*Cha.* His name ?—why—Francis Heartall, is a good name in the city.

*Wid.* Ah, lud a mercy ! Why, Charles ! have you

been among the gipsies? How long since you commenced diviner? You are not the seventh son of a seventh son?

*Cha.* No—I am the son of your father; and, without the gift of divination, can foresee you wish to make Frank Heartall my brother.

*Wid.* No, no, Charles; there are enough of the family already.

*Cha.* Yes: and if there are not a great many more, it will not be your fault, sister! Ha, ha, ha!

*Wid.* Monster! but let this silence you at once. I have a—sort of—floating idea, that I like this Heartall: but how it has come to your knowledge, brother-soldier, is beyond my shallow comprehension.

*Cha.* Know then, sister, that Heartall was the earliest friend of my youth; I love the fellow—

*Wid.* So do I—it is a family failing.

*Cha.* When boys, we were school-fellows, class-fellows, play-fellows; I was partner in his pranks, fellow-sufferer in his disgrace, co-mate in mischief; we triumphed in each other's pleasures, and mourned together our little imaginary distresses.

*Wid.* It is all over then: I must make you brothers, you love one another so well. You will have it so: its all your doing!

*Cha.* Ingenuous sister! I could hug you to my heart. A noble-minded fellow loves you; you feel he merits your affection, and scorn the little petty arts that female folly too often practices to lead in slow captivity a worthy heart, for the pleasure of sacrificing it at the shrine of vanity.

*Wid.* Very true. But I do not mean to give practical lessons to flirts or coquettes; who, by the bye, are a very useful race of people in their way—so many fools and coxcombs could never be managed without them. No,—if I do marry the grocer, 'tis merely to oblige you.

*Enter GEORGE, L. H.*

*Geo.* Mr. Heartall, madam, if you are at leisure.

*Wid.* Shew him up. *[Exit George, L. H.]*

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha!—We shall have the devil to pay, presently:—Heartall does not know me as your brother.

*Wid.* How?—is it possible?

*Cha.* I met him just as I arrived ; wormed his secret from him, and swore I would find you out. My presence here will astonish him ! he will suppose me his rival, and—Hush !—he's here ! *(Retires up the stage.)*

*Enter FRANK HEARTALL, L.H.*

*Frank H.* Madam, I am come to apologize for my abrupt departure from your apartments this morning ; and to offer such conviction of the falsehood of the charge against me, as—

*Wid.* I entreat you will not take the trouble to mention it : pray think no more of it. *(Charles coming forward on the opposite side.)* Give me leave to introduce a very particular friend of mine.

*Cha.* *(Going to him.)* Frank !—Frank Heartall !—I am overjoyed to meet you here.

*Frank H.* Excuse me—Charles—you have all the joy to yourself.

*Wid.* This gentleman tells me, sir, that you and he are very old acquaintance.

*Frank H.* Yes, ma'am, very old.

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha !—yes, ma'am, very old indeed !—hey ! Frank ?

*Frank H.* Yes, Charles—so old—that one of us must soon die !

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha !

*Wid.* Heaven forbid ! I hope you will both live to be right-reverend grey-headed old gentlemen.

*Frank H.* No, ma'am, we can't both live to be grey-headed old gentlemen ; one of us may, perhaps.

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha !—What the devil is the matter, Frank ? Got into another scrape ?

*Frank H.* A damn'd one ! Hark you, Charles—a word with you. How did you find that lady out ?

*Cha.* By your description—every body knew it !

*Frank H.* Did they ! Do you mean to pay your addresses to her ?

*Cha.* A blunt question !

*Frank H.* It is an honest one. Do you love her ?

*Cha.* By heaven, I do ! and would risk my life to secure her felicity.

*Frank H.* I loved her first.

*Cha.* That I deny.

*Frank H.* You dare not, Charles. I, too, have a life already risked; it is in her keeping:—if she is yours, your pistols will be unnecessary; you take my life, when you take her! (*Crosses to centre.*)

*Wid.* Ha, ha, ha!

(*F. Heartall fidgetting, and going up to the Widow; Charles and the Widow stifle a laugh.*)

*Frank H.* Madam, I ask your pardon; I believe I was born to torment you: I wish I had never seen you! But pray, madam; don't laugh, now—do—you—love—this gentleman?

*Wid.* From my heart and soul.

*Frank H.* Death!—tortures!—hell!—jealousy!—damnation!—One of us must die! (*Going out, the Widow gets between him and the door, and prevents him.*) Very well, ma'am; very well! (*Going up to Charles.*) You are a traitor, Charles.

*Cha.* (*Coolly.*) Hard words, Frank!

*Frank H.* A false friend!

*Cha.* Worse and worse.

*Frank H.* I could almost call you—villain!

*Cha.* Now you make progress.

*Frank H.* I lov'd you like a brother!

*Cha.* You did—I own it.

*Frank H.* Are you not unworthy of that name?

*Cha.* Ask my sister.

*Frank H.* Who!—Are you sister to—

*Wid.* Ask my brother.

*Frank H.* Madam!—Charles!—Eh!—What!—I am bewildered! Tell me!—are you really brother to this lady?

*Wid.* To be sure he is—ha, ha, ha!—Don't you remember old Jack Woodley's daughter?—Ha, ha, ha!

*Frank H.* (*Striking his forehead.*) O fool! dolt! stupid idiot! By heaven, the circumstance never once entered my head!—Charles! Madam!—Can you forgive me?—Ha, ha, ha! Zounds! I shall go mad!—Ha, ha, ha!—Tol, lol, lol!—I am sure I shall go mad! (*Sings and dances.*)

*Wid.* Did you ever see such a whirligig?—Ha, ha, ha!

*Cha.* A child's top, rather, that requires lashing to keep it up. Ha, ha, ha!

*Frank H.* Lash away! I deserve it richly. But now I have almost recovered my senses, will you both honor me with your company to my old uncle's: my carriage is at the door—for I am now determined to clear up all mysteries, either to my confusion, or the detection of a wanton and hypocritical fiend!

*Wid.* Dare I venture myself with this madman, Charles? Won't he bite, think you?

*Cha.* Not unless the paroxysm returns; in that case, I'll not answer for him.

*Wid.* Then I'll summon up all the resolution I can muster, and attend you to the Governor's without delay.

*Frank H.* Will you! Then I shall go mad, indeed! Zounds! I am half frantic already!—I could run up a steeple, jump down a coal-pit, put St. Paul's in my pocket, and make a walking-stick of the monument! Huzza, huzza!—She is single still, Charles is her brother, and Frank Heartall may yet be a happy fellow!

[*He hurries them off*, L.H.]

END OF ACT IV.

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“ ACT V.

“ SCENE I.—*Malfort's Lodgings.*

“ *Enter* MRS. MALFORT, MALFORT, and FERRET, L. H.

“ *Malf.* This way, sir, pray walk in; will you please to sit?

“ *Fer.* I thank you, sir. I trust you will pardon the intrusion of a plain blunt fellow; not drawn hither to satisfy



“ an idle curiosity, to peep into the habitations of the poor,  
“ and pryingly observe how those that once were prosper-  
“ ous can endure adversity.

“ *Malf. (Proudly.)* Sir!

“ *Fer.* To deal plainly with you, sir, I know that you  
“ are ruined; a bankrupt; your property divided among  
“ your creditors; all done fairly and openly—like a man  
“ of true integrity—an honest bankrupt!

“ *Malf.* Well, sir, I claim no merit from that conduct :  
“ the rules that were made to protect, the laws that have  
“ been wisely legislated to uphold, with honor, the honest  
“ dignity of trade, should never be violated in a commer-  
“ cial nation.

“ *Fer.* That's nobly spoken, sir ;—your sentiments ac-  
“ cord with my own, and I applaud you for them ! Your  
“ father, I suppose, is no more ; we were friends, intimate  
“ friends,—before his last voyage to the Indies ; but,  
“ perhaps, he lives—You, doubtless, can inform me.

“ *Malf. (Much affected.)* Oh !

“ *Mrs. M. (Aside.)* O heavens ! He has touched upon  
“ a subject that is sure to harrow up his very soul, awak-  
“ ing every tender, every filial sensation !

“ *Fer. (Not seeming to perceive Malfort's distress.)*  
“ Your father was a worthy man—an honest man—a man  
“ that—(*Malfort greatly agitated.*) I entreat your pardon,  
“ sir !—Perhaps I should not have named your father ; it  
“ disturbs you.

“ *Malf. (With strong emotion.)* It does indeed ! Bank-  
“ ruptcy, penury, and approaching wretchedness, with all  
“ their dreadful train of consequences, I can arm myself  
“ with patience to endure : but, torn with suspense, tortured  
“ with perplexing doubts and fears—now whispering that  
“ a prosperous father lives ; and now presenting him, sur-  
“ rounded by strangers, on the bed of death, without an  
“ affectionate son to receive his blessing, close his eyes,  
“ or pay the last sad honors to his loved remains.

“ *Fer. (With affected concern.)* Aye—his wealth, too,  
“ perhaps devolving to some interested man, who, to secure  
“ the immense property your father must have left, makes  
“ no strict inquiries after his lost heir. It is a damn'd bad  
“ world : there are few to be depended on.

“ *Malf.* Few indeed ! Yet, sir, amongst that few I have

“ found some, that came like ministering cherubims to my  
“ relief, to chase afflicting melancholy from my breast, and  
“ cheer my mourning wife, my suffering little one.

“ *Mrs. M.* Among such motives, sir, do you not think  
“ humanity may sometimes hold a place ?

“ *Malf.* Or benevolence urge the execution of a noble act ?

“ *Fer.* Aye,—humanity and benevolence sound loftily :  
“ but real benefits are quietly bestowed, without many  
“ words on either side ; as thus—I give—and you take !—

“ (*Offering a paper.*)

“ *Malf.* (*Rejecting it.*) Excuse me, sir ; I must know  
“ your motive first.

“ *Fer.* Hear me, sir ; I am not to learn that you have a  
“ secret enemy, who watches, like a lynx, each loop-hole  
“ through which his damned hypocrisy can creep, to con-  
“ ceal you from your father, that he himself may inherit  
“ the wealth that should be yours.

“ *Malf.* Can there be such a wretch ?

“ *Fer.* There is—

“ *Mrs. M.* Heaven forgive him !

“ *Fer.* Amen, with all my heart !—Now, sir, what can  
“ my motive be ? This paper that I offer you, is an un-  
“ limited letter of credit on my house ; draw for what-  
“ ever sums your necessities may demand ; fly from your  
“ enemies—in India you may once again be restored to  
“ your father, and to all those large possessions which  
“ properly belong to you. (*A pause.*) In this seeming  
“ act of kindness I shall be no loser ; send me the value  
“ of my money in produce from the East, and my profit  
“ will overpay the obligation. (*With warmth, and great*  
“ *seeming good-nature.*)

“ *Malf.* Sir—Your bounty overpowers me—I cannot  
“ answer you :—Harriet !

“ *Mrs. M.* You look to me, Henry, as if you expected  
“ reluctant compliance to your pleasure, or that I should  
“ peevishly oppose the prospect of dawning happiness,  
“ which now auspiciously presents itself. But you mistake  
“ me, Henry ;—my child, my husband, are my country ;  
“ I see no distance in universal space, if you are with me :  
“ over icy mountains or burning sands, all hardships are  
“ equally indifferent—while I possess your confidence, your  
“ esteem, your love.

" (*Malfort embraces her, tries to speak, but cannot.*)

" *Fer.* It is wisely spoken, madam ;—Here, sir, take this paper ; it is the tribute of honesty to suffering misfortune.

" (*As he offers the paper, JOHN enters, L.H. ; Ferret puts up the paper.*)

" *John.* An old gentleman wishes to speak to Mr. Ferret.

" *Fer.* An old gentleman ? (*Aside.*) Who can it be ?—I shall be at home presently ; I cannot see any body here—

" *Malf.* This apartment is at your service, sir, where you may converse freely with your friend. (*Exit John, L.H.*) We will retire.

" *Fer.* Sir, I thank you.

" [*Exit, Mr. and Mrs. Malfort, R.H.*]

" *Fer.* (*Looking out.*) Death, and ill-fortune ! Simon ! the doating babbler ! All must out !—Old Malfort's arrival can no longer be a secret to his son, and my deep-laid scheme is baffled and abortive. (*Enter SIMON hastily, R.H.*) Well ! what's the matter ?

" *Sim.* Matter ;—Thank heaven, you are found at last !

" *Fer.* Well—why this haste—and what's your errand ?

" *Sim.* (*Ironically.*) Merely to comfort you !—for you have consoled me often. Disgrace holds her heavy weight of shame over your head ; it is suspended by a hair—a breath will snap it, and its fall must crush you !

" *Fer.* Your master is arrived : what then ?

" *Sim.* Nay, I know not :—my conscience is clear ; what sort of face does yours wear ?

" (*MALFORT Senior, without, L.H.*)

" *Malf. Sen.* This is no time for ceremony, madam ;—Mr. Ferret, I know, is here ;—and I must and will see him !

" *Enter MALFORT, Senior, L.H., (and fixes his eyes severely on Ferret.)*

" *Malf. Sen.* Well, sir ;—You are the friendly Mr.

" Ferret !—the faithful agent of my affairs ; the consoler  
" of my sorrows ; the man to whose unerring honor I  
" freely could entrust my fortune and my life !

" *Fer.* I have been such a man :—my books will prove  
" the integrity of my dealings ;—the nature of my de-  
" signs have had their motives, which may hereafter be  
" defined.

" *Malf. Sen.* Their nature is already known—and defi-  
" nition now unnecessary ! When first I knew you, you  
" were my brother's clerk, most humbly situated ; without  
" a parent, friend, or benefactor. I saw you were indus-  
" trious ; I thought you honest ; I took you by the hand ;  
" I lent you capital ; and recommended you as a junior  
" partner in the house. You then seemed grateful :—  
" wealth flowed in upon you, and when my brother and  
" his friends retired from the bustle of laborious business,  
" the firm was yours, and you were crowned with riches  
" as abundant as they were unexpected—

" *Fer.* Granted.

" *Malf. Sen.* How has your gratitude repaid me ?—  
" Duplicity has marked your conduct ; dark hints and  
" inuendoes swelled each page of your sophisticated  
" letters, wherein you seemed as if your open friendly  
" heart recoiled from the recital of my son's misfortunes—

" *Fer.* Nay,—be patient, Mr. Malfort.

" *Malf. Sen.* Patient !—Can I be patient, sir, and even  
" suppose all this ? When I, a father, ignorant of his  
" fate, loaded with riches, without a natural heir that  
" should inherit them, felt the dreadful suspense of be-  
" lieving that I had still a living son, involved, perhaps,  
" in every misery, and could not stretch a parental hand  
" to save him from despair !

" *Fer.* Hear me, Mr. Malfort !

" *Malf. Sen.* No, sir ; an attempt at palliation would  
" but increase the enormity of your conduct ! After  
" much toil and labor, I have at length discovered that  
" my son yet lives—stripped of his all by unavoidable  
" calamity :—All this you knew, it seems : and yet, with  
" the treacherous affectation of friendship, cautiously con-  
" cealed the place of his retreat from a fond father's  
" inquiring eye ; while, with half smothered hints you  
" blackened over his conduct, and made me almost curse

"the hour that once I thought most happy, when bounteous nature blest me with a son !

"*Fer.* Well, sir,—I must now endure your anger—your reproaches ; milder moments will occur.

"*Malf. Sen.* Here we shall close ;—and I have done with you for ever. I am content :—I have seen you ; told you my mind ; and I now abandon you to your reflections. It was a barbarous friendship, sir, that probed the mind's worst wound, and yet withheld the healing balm that ministers relief. [*Exit, L.H.*]

*Fer.* The hour of peril is at hand !

"*Re-enter MR. and MRS. Malfort, R.H.*

"*Malf. (Observing Simon.)* New wonders crowd upon my imagination ! Harriet, come hither !—Look upon that old man. If my memory does not fail me, he has often borne me in his arms.

"*Re-enter Malfort, Sen.*

"*Malf. Sen.* With regret, sir, I demand one act of justice at your hands—

"*Malf.* Heavenly powers !

"(*Sinks into a chair.—Mrs. Malfort takes his hand in hers ; and throwing her arm round his neck, stands a fixed spectator of what is passing in the front of the stage.*)

"*Malf. Sen.* I entreat—I supplicate you not to add to the suspense I have already endured ; but, as I am well informed you are acquainted with every circumstance of my son's distressful state, I beseech you give me the clue to his retreat—give me the means to find, to cherish, and to relieve him ! You will not, then indulge me ?

"*Fer. (Coolly.)* I would conceal from you the cause of sorrow and regret, till opportunity was ripe, and discovery no longer dangerous ;—besides, I have other reasons for my silence, which you may know hereafter. [*Exit, L.H.*]

"*Malf. Sen.* Which I must know hereafter !—Ungrateful viper ! (*Walking about in great agitation.*) I know not how to proceed ;—I will not sleep until I have found my boy ! Simon, let the carriage be ready.



" *Sim.* It shall, sir

[*Exit Simon, L.H.*]

" *MALFORT, Jun. comes forward.*

" *Malf.* Sir—

" *Malf. Sen.* Your pleasure, sir ?

" *Malf.* Have you forgot me ?—Has misery erased my name even from the book of nature ?

" *Malf. Sen.* Merciful heaven ! Providence at length has guided my wearied mind, my anxious heart to that blest spot where I embrace my son. (*They rush into each others arms.*)

" *Malf.* The storm is past ! My long-lost father !—my scattered senses, denying the conviction of sight and feeling, can scarcely credit that I hold him in these trembling arms.

" *Malf. Sen.* My son ! my son ! But where is the gentle partner of your cares ? She whose patients suffering—

" *Malf.* (*Taking Mrs. Malfort by the hand.*) Here, my father—To this blest saint I owe my life, and all the future comforts that await it. Despair had seized me, and the conflict must have ended—had not heaven inspired that virtuous tongue with arguments of celestial oratory, and snatch'd me from the crime of self-destruction !

" *Mrs. M.* The joyful feelings of my heart—but little used to such sensations—at present overpower and prevent the utterance of what my mind would dictate to the father of my husband :—affection, duty, and respect, bind me his and yours for ever.

" *Malf. Sen.* (*Embracing her.*) Then live with him for ever, in this heart ! The wife, whose virtuous ardour affliction could not damp, nor penury diminish, adds lustre to that sex from whose blest converse we derive our most substantial sum of earthly happiness ! But come, my children, let us retire, and calmly canvass each strange event, each circumstance which now appears involved in mystery, that have so long obscured us from each others knowledge :—the frowns of angry fortune shall no more assail you ; and oh ! may all your future days, be days of harmony and love !

" [*Exeunt, L.H.*]



SCENE II.—*The Governor's House.**Enter the GOVERNOR and TIMOTHY, R.H.*

*Gov.* Pooh ! pooh !—I can't believe it ; I won't believe it, Timothy ! Ferret is an odd fellow—coarse, but honest ; old English oak—a rough bark, but a sound heart !

*Tim.* Yes, rough as a hedge-hog ; but he can be as smooth as a lizard, when it answers his purpose.

*Gov.* Why, what the devil is the matter with the grumbling mongrel ?—Get about your business, you nightmare !—you death watch !—you wet-blanket !—you flap-winged raven !—

*Tim.* I am gone !—I'll croak no more. (*Going, returns.*) Mr. Ferret is an honest man—and you'll find him out !—

*Gov.* I have found him out !

*Tim.* For an honest man ?

*Gov.* Puppy !

*Tim.* When he is found out for an honest man, I hope I shall be considered as the greatest rogue in the universe.

*Gov.* Thou art the most impudent rogue that ever wagged a saucy tongue !—a barking whelp, that lets nothing pass without a snarl !

*Tim.* Well : I must snarl !—I am allow'd to do nothing else : I wish I might bite.

*Gov.* His love for Frank makes him, perhaps, a little too anxious for the boy's prosperity. He would not wish to see him proved a villain or a seducer.

*Tim.* He would.

*Gov.* It's a lie, Timothy !—he would rather see him dead than dishonored.

*Tim.* He does not care which.

*Gov.* Scoundrel !—hey ?—what ?

*Tim.* Order in your bow string, Mr. Governor, and have me strangled at once—for it will out—

*Gov.* What ?—speak, you dog, or my anxiety will choak me !—

*Tim.* I will : heaven's agent on this side the moon is your nephew !

*Gov.* Well.

*Tim.* Belzebub's own factor upon earth is old Ferret !

*Gov.* Hey !—Well !

*Tim.* They can't agree, of course.

*Gov.* Well !

*Tim.* Is not every mouth open'd with your nephew's praise ?

*Gov.* Umph !—Yes.

*Tim.* Don't the generous delight in him ?

*Gov.* Aye.

*Tim.* The rich admire him ?

*Gov.* They do.

*Tim.* The benevolent respect—

*Gov.* And the poor adore him !—'Tis true :—my eyes are opening.

*Tim.* Whose tongue defamed his good actions, and slandered his very thoughts ?

*Gov.* Umph !—Old Ferret's !

*Tim.* Who accused him of seduction ?

*Gov.* Old Ferret !—and said he had an evil design upon an innocent young widow !

*Tim.* And then call'd her a vixen ?

*Gov.* Ferret ! villainous, vindictive, hypocritical Ferret !

*Tim.* And all for what ?—Shall I tell you, sir ?

*Gov.* Out with it.

*Tim.* That you might disinherit your nephew—and make him heir to your wealth ! Are you awake, sir ?

*Gov.* Yes, Timothy, wide awake ! I see his villainy, and will crush all his hopes—the dry-skin'd hypocrite !

*Tim.* He has been as busy in other families, sir ; you will hear from Mr. Malfort some of Mr. Ferret's pleasant manœuvres !

*Gov.* Ay—Malfort's arrived, I hear. Has he found his son ?

*Tim.* Yes, sir ; he's caught !

*Gov.* Ferret ! Treachery ! Malfort was his best friend, and made a man of him.

*Enter JAMES, L. H.*

*Jam.* Mr. Malfort, and his son and daughter, are in the anti-chamber.

*Gov.* I'll come to them directly. (*Exit James, L.H.*) I shall be happy to congratulate my worthy old friend on

the recovery of his son ; and he shall congratulate me, too—for, though I always said Frank had a heart, it never appear'd till now so pure and so unspotted. If Jack Woodley's daughter will bless him with her hand, I will pour abundance on them, and the sight of their first boy will make the Governor the merriest, happiest old bachelor in the United Kingdom. [Exit, L.H.]

*Tim.* Then I shall be merry, too :—" Like master, like man." [Exit, L.H.]

SCENE III.—*Another Apartment at the Governor's.*

*Enter* FRANK HEARTALL, WIDOW, and CHARLES, L. H.

*Frank H.* This way, madam : my uncle and his friends will join us presently :—Old Ferret is sent for ; and all parties will be assembled, to witness either my triumph or disgrace.

*Cha.* Courage, Frank !—am not I your ally ?—and here is my sister, as a corps de reserve !

*Frank H.* If she condescends to take the field, the day is our own, my boy ! (*They retire up.*)

*Enter the* GOVERNOR, MALFORT, Senior, and MR. and MRS. MALFORT, R. H.

*Malf. Sen.* Every circumstance, my worthy friend, convinces me of his artful management. I was at a loss to guess at the nature of his designs, but now 'tis plain and palpable,—he wished to be my heir ! he panted for my wealth ; and cared not if my son, and all that was most dear to him, had perished in wretched obscurity.

*Gov.* The spider—he had entangled my poor nephew in his snare ; but my Timothy came with a friendly brush, and swept the cobweb down.

*Wid.* (*Coming forward.*) Governor ! we have entered your fort without demanding the keys of the garrison ;—this gentleman was our convoy. (*Pointing to Heartall.*)

*Gov.* What, my lively widow ! Have you caught the military phrase—and use it, too, to gratify the feelings of the old Governor ?

*Wid.* It is the language of the day, sir :—the noble enthusiasm that pervades all ranks and sexes !—When the daughters of Britain feel the military ardour, and give the word “ To arms ! ” let her enemies beware—for then, indeed, her sons are irresistible ! This is the universal phrase of English women, and should come with double force from the lips of a soldier's daughter !

*Gov.* Bravo ! my charming, lively widow ! Honest Jack Woodley's daughter !

*Wid.* And his son, too, at your service. (*Introducing Charles.*)

*Gov.* (*Taking his hand.*) Young gentleman, I rejoice to see you ; receive a cordial welcome from your father's friend.

*Cha.* I shall be happy, sir, to prove myself deserving of your kindness.

*Wid.* What ! my friends ! Mr. and Mrs. Malfort, too ! I congratulate myself upon this happy assembly.

*Mrs. M.* Your happy, grateful friends !

*Enter TIMOTHY, L.H.*

*Tim.* (*To the Governor.*) He is come ; shall I admit him ? Satan's below !

*Gov.* The devil he is ! Shew him in ! Draw up his mittimus, and I'll send him in a pass-cart to his own dominions !

*Tim.* I am impatient till it is signed.

[*Exit Timothy, L.H.*]

*Enter FERRET, L.H.*

*Fer.* Well, ladies and gentlemen ; I am brought hither, as I understand, for the purposes of accusation and defence :—Produce your charges ;—of what am I accused ?

*Frank H.* Ask your own conscience.

*Fer.* That cannot answer to your satisfaction. I have wound it to my purpose, and its dictates I have already obeyed.

*Frank H.* Have you not basely injured me ? traduced my name, blackened my fairest intentions, perverted my very thoughts, and, by an anonymous and villainous assertion, put even my life in danger ?

*Fer.* Go on : I am come to hear you.

*Malf. Sen.* And to redress, I hope, if yet 'tis in your power.—The deepest, deadliest sin, is black ingratitude ! My son you would for ever have concealed from my knowledge ; and, in the very moment when you had discovered I had found some clue to his retreat, like an arch fiend, you come with offers of pretended bounty !—you would for ever have banished him to a distant clime, and robbed an anxious parent of his last fond hope—his remaining solace, the comfort of his declining age—his only son !

*Gov.* To me, there is no excuse, in nature, for his enormous, over-heap'd measure of hypocrisy !

*Fer.* There is.

*Gov.* Name it, viper !

*Fer.* Avarice!—the blackest fiend of hell ! I plead no other. Were there no such vice, I should have been an honest man. Could the covetous man but feel, as I now do, he would scatter his ill-gotten wealth among the friendless poor ; and, shunning the society of those his avarice had wrong'd, fly to some distant spot, and end his solitary days in repentance and remorse. To such contrition have I doomed myself.—Heaven is my witness, I could not injure you, nor any of you, had not avarice harden'd my heart, and rendered it callous to the workings of humanity. 'Tis a vice too common, and more destructive in society than swords or poison.—What is the gamester's stimulus ? What is the miser's god ?—Avarice ! What urges the guilty wretch to betray his friend ? The mock patriot his country ?—Avarice ! invincible, destructive avarice !

*Malf. Sen.* Banish the guilty passion—retire into the shade of solitude, where penitence may once more restore you to yourself.

*Fer.* I never felt, till now, the black perdition of the crime—but you are fellow-creatures, and may pity what you can't forgive. I came prepared to meet this trial, this disgrace—and to make atonement by the only act of justice in my power :—Young man ; (*To Charles, who crosses to L.H.*) You are a soldier, not over-burden'd with the gifts



of fortune :—your father was my friend ; your sister's husband was my patron, and assisted, with his purse, my most prosperous speculations ;—receive these papers—the memorandums, previously prepared for you, of what shall legally be ratified.—And when you, hereafter, count your large possessions over, honor and plain honesty will instruct you how to act,—if you can remember the last sharp regretful words of him that tells you—you are a bad man's heir !

[*Exit, L.H.*

(*Charles retires up, and examines the papers.*)

*Frank H.* Charles, what are those papers ? An inventory of his villainies, or a renunciation of his errors ?

*Cha.* Neither, Frank ;—An extract from his will, and a memorandum of a deed of gift—by which I am to possess an ample annuity during his life, and the residue of his property after his demise.

*Wid.* Astonishing !

*Cha.* 'Tis true, upon my honor ! (*F. Heartall looks over the papers.*)

*Wid.* This generous act should cancel many of his ill deeds—let us all endeavour to pity and forgive him :—What say you, Governor, should we bear malice ?

*Gov.* No, my charming widow :—I am exactly of your opinion. I cannot catch the little twinkling corner of that arch eye, and differ from you, you little lively toad ! Come, Frank, he must be forgiven.

*Frank H.* Before I finally close with your proposal, confirm my sentence—guilty, or not guilty ?

*Wid.* Come, Governor, sum up the evidence !

*Gov.* I will, my little Alfred !—my little petticoat legislator—culprit, stand forth !

*Frank H.* Mercy ! uncle, mercy !

*Gov.* You are Francis Heartall, I think—nephew, as I have heard, to a foolish old Governor of that name ; and I prophecy, heir to all his wealth :—he has heard of your tricks, and witnessed your enormities ; in which he now begins to perceive there was neither vice nor villainy.—You are, therefore, free upon that charge ! But for an unthinking spendthrift, who could squander the overflowings of his purse in purposes of old-fashioned benevolence—what punishment can be adequate to the enormity of such a crime ?—



*Frank H.* Mercy, again, uncle !—mercy !

*Gov.* I therefore doom you to imprisonment for life—in those dear arms ! (*Taking the Widow's hand.*)

*Wid.* No !—I can't surrender.—

*Cha.* (*Retorting.*) But you'll capitulate upon honorable terms !—Hey, sister ?

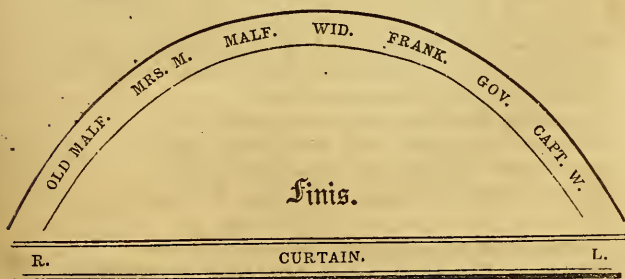
*Wid.* What, brother soldier, do you fall in to bring up the rear ?—Well !—If it must be so, it must :—Heartall, there's my hand ! A mad and cheerful heart accompanies it—indulge it in its little whims ; do not censure too freely its little caprices—though it may sometimes overflow at the distresses of the wretched, or gently melt at sorrows not its own—yet there still is room for friendship, confidence, and love.

*Gov.* The powers of heaven shower their blessings on you.

*Wid.* Thanks, generous Governor. (*To the characters, and in a military accent.*) Attention !—fall back ! (*They retire one pace back, she comes forward.*) In perilous times it may not be improper to request the countersign—Say, is it “ Victory,” or “ Death ?”—your hands decide it. (*In a military tone.*) “ Rear rank, take close order !” (*The characters advance.*)—(*To them*) You have received a voluntary contribution from a British public—let us endeavour to deserve it ; and by our future efforts prove our gratitude to each loyal hand and heart that yields its generous protection to—

“ A SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER !”

#### DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS.



## EPILOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF THE COMEDY.)

*Spoken by Mrs. Jordan.*

BEFORE the fatal knot is fairly tied ;  
Before I change the Widow for the Bride ;  
Once more at this tribunal I appear,  
Nor doubt your favor to a VOLUNTEER—  
Such am I now—though not by martial laws,  
*I* VOLUNTEER *it*—in an Author's cause ;  
This, his first bantling, could your candour spare,  
And take his offspring to your fost'ring care—  
Nurtur'd by *you* the tendril slip may root,  
And fairer blossoms from its branches shoot.

Like puppies born are all dramatic brats,—  
For *nine long days* they are as blind as bats ;  
Poor crawling creatures, sons of care and night :  
Then let this live till it can see the light ;  
And should you foster it to twenty-one,  
Why then——Oh, no,——  
Dramatic bantlings, *never go alone* ;  
Unlike mankind, if once the *nurse* forsake 'em.  
They die by inches—and the *dogs* won't take 'em.  
Say is the day our own—how goes my cause ?  
You need not speak—I'll judge by your applause.  
'Tis well—this approbation's cheering ;—  
I claim some merit from my *Volunteering* ;—  
Not like the hardy sons of Albion's soil,  
Disdaining peril, and severest toil ;  
A mass of subjects in one loyal band,  
To drive the spoiler from their native land ;  
And future tyrants teach that host to fear,  
Which boasts the name of *British Volunteer* !

Ladies—I one proposal fain would make,  
And trust you'll hear it for your country's sake,—

While glory animates each *manly* nerve,  
Should British *Women* from the contest swerve ?  
No !——

We'll form a female army—of RESERVE !  
And class them thus—*Old Maids* are *Pioneers* ;  
*Widows*, *Sharp-shooters*—*Wives* are *Fusileers* ;  
*Maids* are *Battalion*—that's—all under twenty—  
And as for *Light Troops*—we have those in plenty !  
*Vixens* the trumpet blow—*Scolds* beat the drum—  
When thus prepar'd—what enemy *dare come* ?  
Those eyes that even Britons could enslave,  
Will serve to light poor Frenchmen to their grave ;  
So shall the Artillery of British charms  
Repel invaders without force of arms !

If this succeeds—as I the scheme have plann'd,  
I expect, at least, the honor of command ;  
I have—an *Aid-de-Camp*—behind the scene,  
Who all this winter in the *Camp* has been ;  
Inur'd to service in the tented field,  
She can, with ease, the pond'rous musket wield !  
The martial skill she shall impart to *you*,  
Which on this spot so oft has had review :—  
Then, tremble France !—since *British Women* can  
A firelock *handle*—as *they do a fan* !

Now, Brother Soldiers—dare I sisters join ?  
If you, this night, your efforts should combine,  
To save *our corps* from anxious hope and fear,  
And send out—Mercy, as a VOLUNTEER !  
To whose white banner, should the critics flock,  
Our rallying numbers might sustain the shock,  
The sword shall drop—then cease impending slaughter,  
If Mercy's shield protects the—*Soldier's Daughter* !



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